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Ocean of Jewels

PRAMEYARATNARNAVA

OF
Lallu Bhatta

English Translation

by

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PUBLISHERS NOTE

The Ocean of Jewels is an English translation of Lallu Bhattas (17th cent.) Prameyaratnarnava an outstanding original treatise on the Suddhadvaita Brahmavada doctrine as propounded by Mahaprabhu Sri Vallabhacharya (14791530 A.D.).

Lallu Bhatta belonged to the lineage of the Acharya, which originated from Rukmini, Goswami Sri Vitthalanathas daughter. He was both an erudite scholar and a bhaktipractitioner.

Prameyaratnarnava of Lallu Bhatta is one of the very few works which summarize all the important principles of Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharyas doctrines of Brahmavada. According to the philosophy of the Acharya, Brahman i.e. Absolute, is beyond any single definition because it is the abode of contradictory attributes, and Krishna is Brahmans ultimate form. How Brahman is Krishna and Krishna is Brahman is the subject matter of this text.

The work is written in the Vedantic style of Shastartha (scriptural debate) with different schools. The purpose of this Vedantic vada is not to claim any superiority but to investigate into spiritual matters with a view to establishing truth. The language of the author is unambiguous and lucid. The work is replete with passages from scriptures about actual devotional practicethe most quotated authority being Srimadbhagavata. The author holds that knowledge without devotion is dry.

The work is divided into eight chapters which deals with Nature of the World, World as Gods form, Nature of the Supreme, Nature of Gods grace, Eligibility of the blessed devotion, Omnipresence of the Supreme, Rewards of blessed . devotees and Theory of cognition.

The celebrated translator who has taken complete refuge under Sriman Mahaprabhu has rendered a yeomans service by presenting a literal translation of a siddhanta work of the Pushti Marga school, which may be considered to be the first English work of the Suddhadvaita doctrines. It will certainly allow the English speaking readers a firm grasp on the world of Vedantic devotional thinking.

We hope that the Bhaktas and scholars of Indian Philosophy will welcome this publication, which will encourage us to take up similar projects in future.

PROLOGUE

I worship Shri Krishna, the Lord of the Govardhan hill, who is intoxicated with the fresh, youthful, and extremely sweet forms of the Gopis of Vrindavan. He dances the brilliant beautiful rasa celebration with those dairy maids in the forest of Vrindavan. He has been depicted by Shri Vallabhacharya and his son Shri Vitthalnathji as the Beloved of Loving Devotion. The Upanishads speak of Him as consisting of divine mood.

I bow my head to mother Yashodas son; His face beautiful like the moon. Child Krishna is my family Deity. His lotus feet are difficult to attain for Brahma the Creator and Shiva; He is known through devotion.

I take the shelter of Shri Vallabhacharya. Through his :grace divine souls realize the blissful form of Shri Krishna who is disclosed in the Upanishads and replete with divine attributes.

I salute Shri Vitthalnathji, whose mind is immersed in the Gopis mood of loving devotion. He has clearly uncurtained the nature of the Supreme Being, who is comprised of divine mood, and proven n the Vedanta.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Ocean of Jewels. (Sanskrit: Prameyaratnaarnava) was written by Lalu Bhattji. He was born in the late 17th century in Northern India and wrote some original works, of which the Ocean of Jewels is one, as well as many purports on the works of Shrimad Vallabhacharya, the distinguished 15th century teacher (14791530 A.D.) who taught the devotional Path of Grace. Even after several hundred years, there has not been written in any language to my knowledge a single work which summaries all the important principles of Shri Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharyas doctrine, which is referred to as pure non dualism, or Brahmavada, the philosophy that beholds everything as God and nothing but God as concisely as in the Ocean of Jewels.

Most of the great commentators and authors of the Brahmavada lineage were direct male descendants of Shri Vallabhacharya. In Vedic Culture, spiritual lineages are either from father to son, which is called "bindu" or seed, or from guru to disciple which is referred to as "nada" or sound. Shri Vallabhacharyas lineage, which is handed down from father to son, has for over five hundred years been blessed with a continual line of great teachers. It is believed that the divinity of Shri Vallabhacharya, who is considered to be an incarnation of Shri Krishna, manifests within the lineage. Lalu Bhattji is unique in that his lineage is said to have originated from Shri Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharyas second son Shri Vitthalnathjis daughter, Rukmimi. He was a contemporary of the great lineage holder Purushottamji who composed copious texts on the writings of Shri Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya and is considered to be the greatest commentator of the Acharyas works.

Lalu Bhatt lived in the city of Kota in the present day state of Rajasthan. The "Svarupa" or Deity of Child Krishna (Bala Krishna) that he served, can still be seen in the temple there. Besides being a pundit, he was also a "bhakta", a follower of Lord Krishna. At the beginning of "The Ocean of Jewels", as well as in his other works, he always pays his. respects to his personal Deity, Bala Krishna, or to Giridhari,. the form of Shri Krishna which held up the Govardhana Hill,. as well as to his root guru, Shri Vallabhacharya and his son Shri Vitthalnathji. His initiating guru, also lineage holder from the Vallabh family, was Shri Giridhari Gosvami.

Lalu Bhattjis works were written in Sanskrit, the language of the gods. His style is clear and lucid and because his works are devoid of ambiguities, the newcomer to the ocean of the" Path of Grace will find solace in his writings whether reviewing his purports or original works. The Ocean of Jewels has covered all the major aspects of Shri Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharyas teachings, and it is for this reason that I was directed to undertake the translation of the text. Although there are many texts available in Sanskrit, Hindi, and Gujarati on the teachings of Shri Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya, there is no English text that gives an indepth discussion on the nature of Brahmavada, thus leaving the student who does not know Sanskrit, Hindi, or Gujarati incomplete access to the remark able view of Vallabhacharyas world of Brahmavada.

Besides the mean of Jewels, Lalu Bhatt has written two.(, other independent treatises, Sevakaumudi and Nirayarna. Sevakaumudi explains the greatness of serving Shri Krishna, and Nirayarna was written with the object of removing any questions that might arise in regards to the writings of Shri Vallabhacharya and Shri Vitthalnathji. They were both written after the completion of the Ocean of Jewels. Lalu Bhattjis purports on Shri Vallabhacharyas Subodhini is also one of his better known works.

I had the great pleasure of studying, and later translating, this work with the present day authority on the teachings of Shri Vallabhacharya, Goswamy Shri Shyam Manoharji, who is a descendant of Shri Vallabhacharya and a member of the first house. In the Vallabhacharya lineage there are seven

houses, one for each of Shri Vitthalnathjis seven sons. The first houses members ate descendants of Shri Girdharji, Shri Vitthalnathjis eldest son.

It is totally through his guidance that this present translation has achieved its present from. He went through the text, sometimes spending hours with me over the meaning of a single I world, made many corrections, and gave numerous insights into the text. Gosvamy Shyam Manoharji was concerned that University students did not have a proper English text to study the teaching of Shri Vallabhacharya, and some of the texts that are currently being used in Bombay and other Universities in India and abroad as well do not present Shri Vallabhacharyas iteaching in a bonafide manner. Many other English books written by pundits within the lineage either require knowledge of Sanskrit, because the texts are filled with Sanskrit quotations that .are not translated into English, or are general introductions, .and hence do not review the teachings in a formal, systematic Vendantic style as is found in the Ocean of Jewels. Kedar Nath Mishrajis scholarly Hindi translation of the Ocean of Jewels, .as well as his introduction, extensive foot notes, and quotations from other sources have been a great help to this present work.

Shri Vallabhacharyas teachings are known to his followers ! :as the "Pushti Marga" or the Path of Grace. Philosophically, it is called "Brahmavada,. but actually it cannot be limited to any single definition because Brahman is beyond the limit of any single conception. Brahman is the abode of contradictory 1 attributes and for Vallabhacharya, Krishna is Brahmans ultimate form. Krishna can simultaneously found ate the universe and sit as a child on his mother Yashodas lap. Shri Vallabhacharya blind disciple Surdas reveals this wonder very adeptly I" in a poem he sang before Shri Krishna in the presence of his teacher...

"The lords configuration is all brilliance, the entire creation .. rests in Him. He is the spiritual master of the entire world, its father, its Lord. He is difficult to be realized. through the " practice of Yoga, sacrifice, chanting, austerities and fast, yet 1 that same Lord dwells in his fathers home, the king of Gokul.

"In his belly rest the three worlds as well as all the creatures of land and sea, the five elements and the four directions. Yet

that very same Lord, the treasure of mother Yashodas house hold, swings in a cradle at home."

How Brahman is Krishna, and how Krishna is Brahman is. the subject matter of this text. Because Krishna is everything. his truth is experienced in the world, within the individual soul, as well as in the ultimate reality. This is the basis of Brahmavada, the philosophical outlook of Shri Vallabhacharya that embraces absolutely everything as God and nothing but God. It is also replete with passages about the actual devotional. practice. Knowledge without devotion is dry, while devotion that lacks the foundation of knowledge can be unstable. They are both necessary for spiritual fruitition. Shri Vallabhacharya defines devotion as "knowledge of Gods greatness. coupled with firm and all encompassing love..

This is his interpretation of the scriptural type of devotion., That devotion which is gracefilled is unconditioned and does. not require knowledge of Gods greatness for love to arise. Those who have the graceful devotion do not love Krishna because, He is the Almighty God, but because, He is Krishna. In some circumstances, knowledge could even be an obstacle. Once, when mother Yashoda was curious to see if her son Krishna had eaten dirt, looked inside his mouth where she suddenly beheld the entire creation. At that moment she no longer felt parental love towards her darling, but viewed him as. the Supreme Power of the universe. Her sweet devotional attitude changed and became full of awe and wonder. Shri Krishoa, feeling an absence of her innocent love, then cast 3;. charm around His mother so that she would forget his majesty.: and could again rest in the gracefilled abode of parental devotion towards Him.

According to the teachings of Shri Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya, there are basically four different devotional attitudes that can be cherished towards Shri Krishna. The devotee can be the Lords servant, friend, parent, or lover. Many people have incorrectly felt that Shri Mahaprabhujis Path of Grace is centred in the mood of Mother Yashoda, but they have over looked the fact that Shri Vallabhacharya calls the Dairy Maids of Braja, the Gopis, who had amorous feeling for the Lord, the gurus of the Path. The devotional attitude of being.

the Lords "dasa" or servant is the foundation of "bhakti" while the relationship of being His friend, parent, or lover, occurs with the Lords grace. The feeling that the Lord is the father is a devotional attitude that is not embraced in the Path of Grace, because it contains elements of awe and fear, feelings that could obstruct the sweet experience of the gracefilled devotion.

These and other principles that are found in Shri Vallabhacharyas philosophical teachings of Brahmavada, as well as the .devotional teaching revealed within the Path of Grace, comprise his "siddhant., which can be loosely translated as philosophy" but actually means what can take you to "perfection" (siddha) in the "end" (ant). The purpose of "siddhant" is to point the soul in the direction of the ultimate, cultivate the soil of .devotion so that the fruit of divine mood can ripen. It also acts as a protective fence around the esoteric.

The Ocean of Jewels is a text based in "siddhant". It was written by a bhakti practitioner in the Vedantic style, which "incorporates the mode of "shastrartha" , scriptural debate which is carried on with different schools of thought throughout ;the text. This translation is mostly literary, which allows the reader to get a feel of the Vedantic "vada" style approach of discussion, that is, investigation into spiritual matters with the sole purpose of establishing truth. The arguments that the author weaves into the text are not intended to merely disprove another attitude or proudly proclaim their own supremity, but to extract the essence.

In order to have a debate, there must be some agreement as to the bonafide source of spiritual testimony. Shri Vallabhacharya accepts the word of the scripture as the ultimate judge. He accepts the Vedas. Brahma Sutra, Gita, and Bhagavata as well as other writings that agree with them. If there is a question that arises that cannot be clearly explained in the Vedas, the Brahma Sutras should be consulted. If the question still lingers after consultation with that text, the Bhagavat Gita should be reviewed for the correct interpretation. If the Bhagavat Gita is unable to remove the doubt. then the Shrimad Bhagavata should be consulted as the final authority. For this reason. it is the most quoted text in The Ocean of

Jewel and essentially starts where the Gita leaves off. It reveal how many different practitioners received enlightenment through the paths of Karma, knowledge, and devotion, but is. essentially a devotional text. The tenth canto depicts Krishnas Vrindavan pastimes with the Gopis, the diary maids of Braja Their relationship with Krishna exemplifies the perfection or selfless love. "Gopihood" is the zenith of devotion.

Not all schools of Indian thought give verbal testimony the last say. Some feel that perception should be the testimony, but Shri Vallabhacharya can not completely accept that attitude. because when perception can be impaired in relationship with, even worldly objects, it can not always be trusted in its ability to interpret the divine. Some accept analogy, but because Brahman is totally unique, this can also not be accepted. some other schools of thought accept inference, but Shri Vallabhacharya contends that the Supreme can not be grasped through. I mere reason, which can be partial and defective. He therefore concludes that only those four scriptures, and other spiritual writings that agree with them, should be consulted as "praman" if or bonafied sources of information.

Z Although in one sense Shri Vallabhacharya is very scriptural, his teachings also transcend them. He considers that. devotion which is controlled by the canon to be inferior to that bhakti which is inspired through the Lords grace. He has made: three general categories for souls.

1. Pravahi : Souls who are wholly inclined and act according to their own wishes. They appear from the Lords mind.

2. Maryada : Souls who follow the word of the scripture They emerge from the Lords.

3. Pushti : Souls who appear from the Lords bliss for and are influenced by his grace.

Within these three categories, there are many subdivision like Pusthi souls that are mixed with Marayada.

Shri Vallabhacharya teaches the highest pursuit of life is devotion to the Supreme. It transcends the four commonly accepted pursuits of life that are revealed in the scriptures a being righteousness, wealth, desire and liberation. That devotional experience is known through the power of grace, not: austerity, mantra, or meditation can bring the soul into the,

.blessed state. There is no "turn key" formula. Grace is also not a passive post, but a two-way street, where both the Lord and the soul make strides towards each other. It is fortified with the wisdom that everything occurs according to the divine plan, strengthened with the ability to overcome all obstacles, and rests firmly in the abode of refuge. He is the souls protector, master, friend, child, lover, "whatever relation is divinely agreed upon. Grace is the substance that keeps the structure together and lucid. Grace made Krishna who is complete in Himself, unattached, and totally fulfilled, dance for the Dairy Maids for a glass of buttermilk. Grace is what allowed Mother Yashoda to tie up Krishna, who actually can never be bound by any system, mantra, or religion. It is grace that saved the sinner Ajamila from the abode of death when he called out, at the time of death, his youngest sons name, Narayana, which also happens to be the name of the primal Being. Because he repeated the sacred name, he was rescued from the abode of retribution by the Lords servants.

The manifestation of grace cannot be limited; the Lord is able to do, undo, and even do otherwise. Even scriptures can not limit the scope of grace, at best they can reveal the different ways it can manifest, and some of the conditions. Grace is a secret, yet it appears in the world. In order for grace to appear. there must be a stage where the play can be performed. The stage is the world and it is constructed with truth and consciousness. Its aspect of bliss is dormant. It is that hidden treasure that the players on the stage are searching for. Some plot their course according to their mundane wishes, others review the situation and search according to the guidelines revealed in the scriptures, while other blessed souls have appeared on the stage in order to dance with the director/ producer, the creator of the stage and writer of the script. If they lose sight of the all blissful creator of the stage, they search for Him like the Gopis of Vrindavan did who ran from grove to forest, asking the trees and flowers where their beloved had gone They searched directly for the bliss and as Goswamy Shyam Manoharji has explained, the footpaths they have taken have been noted in Shri Vallabhacharyas Path of Grace. Their desire to find the treasure is the most intense of

all the seekers. In that direction Teilhad de Chardin has written..,.

"Someday after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness .the energies of love. Then for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire."

A good actor must know the .nature of the stage, and master all of its elements. To become an accomplished player the soul should comprehend the nature of the world, which is the stage that we all act upon. This is the subject matter of the first chapter of The Ocean of Jewels, The Nature of the world. It is necessary to know that nature of the world, to see it as Gods form, the stage where the lila or divine play is enacted. Then the nature of the soul, the subject matter of the second chapter , can be grasped, whereby the soul can find its place in the play and see that it is a part and parcel of the Lord. The nature of the Supreme, the all blissful director of the soul and the Creator of the world, is the subject matter of the third chapter. The nature of His grace, which allows the soul an important part in the play, is the topic of the fourth chapter. What types of souls should be cast for the various roles and why is explained in the fifth chapter which is called The Nature of the Eligibility of the Blessed Devotion. Their experience of seeing God everywhere is called Total Love, the name of the sixth chapter. Finally the rewards the blessed devotees receive is revealed in the seventh chapter.

In this way, the spiritual journey is summarized within the first seven chapters.

Then there is what may seem to be a digression in the order : the eighth chapter deals with the theory of cognition. I have heard that the eighth chapter is really part of another work that was grouped together later. Whatever be the case, after the fruit is received, the world can be cognised properly, flee from maya. teeming with unblemished joy.

When the seed of eligibility blossoms, the blessed soul gains the: transcendental power to sport wit4 the Supreme within the "lila". It then bears a fruit that even the Lord delights in. All distances are crossed and they begin to play together, in a real world, where all the wonderful things of life that can be experi-

enced through the senses, become a part of the eternal play. Their dormant bliss is revived by the spectacular performance. Then, unlike the lawful mode of worship where the soul acts according to the instruction of the Lord, the creative effort becomes a combined performance, the Lord falls under the loving sway of the soul. Only Krishna, the abode of all contra dictions, can allow Himself to be treated in such a divine fashion, and still not loose any self esteem. This is the reason why He is Avatari, the source of all avatars, or incarnations. He is able to accept worship in any manner, as long as it is directed towards Him. King Kamsa worshipped Krishna feeling that he was death, and through the mood of fear, achieved the sublime. Putana, the demo ness who tried to kill infant Krishna by smearing poison on her breast was awarded a divine fruit similar to His mothers. Krishna is a multidimensional incarnation. He is Lord of the Yogis, as well as the darling of His mother Yashoda. When he walked into the wrestling arena in Mathura to do battle with mighty foes, the ten ways which the spectators viewed Him summarizes the different attitudes that he supports...

..Krishna appeared as thunderbolt to the wrestlers, to some of the male spectators, a jewel among men. He seemed like love incarnate to the ladies, a kinsmen to the cow herders, a chastiser to the vile princes, and as a child to his parents. He was death 10 Kamsa, a weakling to the ignorant, while to the Yogis He represented the Supreme Reality. To the members of his Vrini Clan He was the highest Divinity."

Krishna is described in the Upanishads as being "comprised .of divine mood," who decided "to become many" and then choreographed the world. He is called by many names. In the Bhagavata He is called Bhagavan. elsewhere he is referred to as Brahman, the Super Soul; His names and forms are endless, but his greatest ability for the blessed souls is that be can appear to them in a personalized form, and fulfil their highest spiritual expectation. Then, when the soul sees that "God made man in His own image," the soul can enter into the sport as an equal ;partner,

When Lord Ramas wife Sita was stolen away from Him by

the demon Ravana, Lord Rama, ruler of the universe, became. distraught and cried out "0 Sita, 0 Sita." God in the East has. emotion, He not just simply cast judgement, award punishment, and be a moral and ethical controller, but desires the association of his cherished souls. He has time to laugh and.. cry with them; they bring forth his true nature and make Him.. totally blissful.

This joyous and. playful aspect of the Supreme is known." as Krishna. Even the scriptures were of this aspect and so once. .the lines of the Vedas, curious to know the ultimate truth, prayed, to the Supreme Being requesting knowledge of the His ultimate form. They were blessed with the sight of Shri Vrindavan, the abode of Shri Krishna. Overcome by the sweetness, they requested to be a part of that locus. The Lord told them that in their next birth when He incarnates, they would be born as Gopis of Vrindavan and he would sport with them in the bowers of that magical land. That "lila" is revealed in the tenth canto of the: Shrimad Bhagavata ! it has been sung by the poets, and has always existed as a reality, even realer than the common one, for the blessed souls.

Krishna lila is the hidden essence of the Vedas and Shri Vallabhacharya appeared in 1479 A.D. to bring that reality to light to a relatively small group of people. That was during.. the height of the Mughal invasion of Northern India, which put the entire Vedic culture in jeopardy. People were no longer able to perform all the Vedic injunctions and hypocrisy was rampant. Shri Vallabhacharya listed some of the problems in. his Krishnashraya treatise. There he mentions that in the. present Kali age, all good paths have disappeared and hypocrisy reigns. Even the holy areas have become impure, the mantras. have lost their effectiveness, and the religious teachers are mostly full of pride, while the Vedic ritual has lost its value. Shri Vallabhacharya saw devotion to the infinite Krishna as the best spiritual solution. The worship that was prescribed by the great Vaishnava teacher Ramanuja, Shri Vallabhachalya saw as lacking the inspired Jove which he divined into the practice of Seva or divine service to Go. Penance, used in many Yoga systems to torture the body, was interpreted by Shri Vallabhacharya as. having the divine fire of separation from the Beloved. Knowledge

was important in knowing Gods greatness, which inspired. a firm constant love for Shri Krishna, but by itself was not a. means to the higher states of devotion, and in some cases could even be a pitfall. He preferred songs of praise to prayers, .and because Krishna is all powerful there is no need to request any thing of Him. Heaven did not only exist above, but the great teacher felt that the highest fulfilment was to dance with Shri Krishna here in this world. He advocated the practice or devotion, but also mentioned that the practice was difficult to perform in this present age, and advised to take Gods refuge. Instead of Patanjalis Yoga ideal of killing the senses, to make them void, Shri Vallabhacharya felt that those same God given senses could cognise the divine Krishna who is truth conscious ness and bliss. Krishna's Bliss or Love Form received his. highest regard.

Shri Vallabhacharya made a great distinction between the:: real world which Krishna sports within and the mayic false worlds. The false world is perceived by the intellect that is. tainted with ignorance and miscognition. He strongly disagreed. with Shankaracharias interpretation of Maya which viewed the world as false, regardless of the state of cognition. Shri Vallabhacharyas liberation is not merely freedom from rebirth,. a mergence into God, living in Gods abode, or even having. Gods qualities or proximity, but to relish the bliss form and participate in the "lila". The true transcendental power is to be: able to taste the ultimate sweetness. Renunciation is to renounce all inferior tastes, it is not prompted by a disgust for the world. He advises that it is better to use something in Gods service than to renounce it. His teachings are for all classes of men. even for animals. as we see in the stories of Shri Vitthalnathjis. followers. where even a pigeon receives initiation. His followers were advised to follow their respective stage of life and rules or their heritage; this tradition could only be broken if Krishna's devotion was the cause.

The ultimate purpose of the Path of Grace is to reunite the soul with the Brahman, and hence Shri Vallabhacharyas initiating mantra. the "Brahma Sambandha", which means .connection with Brahman" was given to him by Shri Krishna when he requested the Lord for a divine solution to rectify the spiritual

dilemmas of the divine soul. His path was not to be demonstrated in public temples but within the home. The only means to experience God is "bhava", divine feeling for the Lord. There is no other "turn key formula" that could do.

Shri Vallabhacharya is the ultimate theist, believing that .God exists everywhere, the whole creation is God and nothing but God. This attitude of pure no dualism separated him philosophically from the other Vaishnavas teachers like Nimbark, And Madhva who did not preach such total unity between God .and the world. His position was unique in the world of the .eastern Sun. While the Buddhists and Jains did not consider the existence of God, Shri Vallabhacharya taught that the Lord played within the world taking on various names and forms. While various Yoga systems felt that the conception of God was .only for concentration of mind, a temporary phase, for Shri Vallabhacharya, God was both the means and the fruit, His form is not to be discarded in the highest meditation, but inter Acted with. Shankaracharyas Krishna was viewed as an incarnation, but ultimately magic. He claimed that "Brahman is destitute of qualities." Vallabhacharya revealed that Brahman is devoid of mundane qualities but replete with divine, the abode .of all contradictory attributes, the source of all manifestations, including the beginning less void. He can dance with the Gopis .of Vrindavan and be the abstract goal of aspiring Yogis. He .can steal butter from the dairy maid devotees homes, and become the ethical guidelines that are found in the scriptures. He can play with countless souls at the same time and still remain one without a second. The poet Rasakhan recalls the :secret yet wonderful way He resides :

Brahma the Creator searches,
The Purana sing of his glories.
When lines of the Vedas heard about him
Their desire increased six fold.
But 1 have never seen or heard,
anywhere from anyone about,
the nature of his form.
The men and women could not console me;
Says Rasakhan, I grew tired

from looking and crying.
Till I saw in the distant bower cottage
Lord Krishna, massaging Radhikas feet.

God is more than a supreme moral governor watching over us, He is too busy playing in the groves of Vrindavan to be overly concerned with such matters. The purpose of the philosophy of Shri Vallabhacharya is not merely theoretical, but is intended to help the soul become aware of its sweet relation ship with God. The Ocean of Jewels is more than an introduction to Shri Vallabhacharyas teachings, but can allow the reader a. firm grasp on the world of Vedantic Devotional thinking, a very, healthy approach to reality.

SHYAMDAS

CHAPTER ONE

KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD FACILITATES DEVOTION

This book is a collection of jewel like principles of spiritual life as revealed in passages primarily from Shri Vallabhacharyas Sri Subodhini (a commentary on the Sri Bhagavata), Tattavarthadipanibandha and Anubhasya (a commentary on the Vedanta Sutra), Sri Gosvami Vitthalanathas Vidvanmandana, with excerpts from a few texts by other authors.

Because true understanding of the nature of the world facilitates bhakti I will first discuss this topic using evidence following Sri Vallabhacharyas style in Tattvarthadipanibandha. 1

ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE, THE WORLD IS GOD

These and other passages in the Srutis recognise and establish the philosophical fact that the world is caused by and is Brahman. They all agree that "The world is a modification of the immutable Brahman." (Brahma Sutra)

"He made Himself." (Taittiriya Upanishad, 2.7)

"He became all this... He is the entire world... Whatever there is, is all the Supreme Self." (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, .1.4.3, 4.5.7)

1 When the true nature of the world is understood, that it is a manifestation of the Supreme Brahman, knowledge of Gods greatness is realized which helps nourish the highest and firmest divine love or bhakti. It is for this reason that Vallabhacarya first discusses the nature of tile world in his Tattvarthadipanibandha which is essentially an informal commentary on the Gita.

"He is all this." (Chandogya Upanishad, 7.25.2)

"He became all. The Supreme Person is everything." (Rg. Veda, 10.90.2)

A REAL WORLD WITH MANIFESTATION AND CONCEALMENT

Sri Vallabhacharya in his commentary on the Brahma Sutra.. Anubhasya, supports the tenet of the Brahma Sutra passage,

"Brahman is the material cause of the world."

The world is not mayic (illusory) nor is it different from the: Lord. It is real and undergoes phases of manifestation and concealment but is devoid of origination and annihilation. 2

EXISTENCE NOT NON-EXISTENCE

The Gita says, "What does not exist cannot be, and what can never not exist." (Gita, 2.16)

The world in not non-existence (asat) nor does it have the other four forms or absence of existence. 3

QUESTION : You assert that Brahman and the world are identical but a pot and a cloth within the world do not appear to be identical. A pot is obviously not a cloth, therefore mutual absence 4 of each others qualities is unavoidable. If this were not true, then we could use a pot to cover the body like it was a cloth and vice versa.

2 Things in the world appear and disappear, but are never really destroyed. The creation is a part of Brahman, and because Brahman is without any beginning or end, the world and all of the things within it, despite what we might see, are eternal. They pass through phases of manifestation and concealment like the waning and waxing of the moon.

3 For instance, a woman with a thin waist is said to have no waist. This does not mean that she has no waist, but is just a way of saying that she is thin. In a similar style, when the scriptures negate in their various ways the existence of something, it is not in an absolute sense.

4 Mutual absence means that the qualities of a pot are not in the cloth and vice versa.

ANSWER :

Not true. The Taittiriya Upanisad expounds, "He willed to. become many." (Taittiriya, 2.6)

Through His agency of multiplying, all the attributes of a cloth etc. are concealed in the pot while only the attributes of a pot etc. are manifested in the pot.. In this light there is no confusion of entities.

EVERY OBJECT HAS ITS PURPOSE

Although Brahmans attributes appear in every object in the world, the Lord has put a limited purpose in every form So a particular object cannot be used to serve a purpose for which it , is not intended;

The Tapaniya Sruti admits this unity of all things : "Everything is identical with all objects."

Also, the Brhadaraynaka Upanishad relates that the seer Vamadeva, at the time of enlightenment, felt, "I have become the sun, Manu, everything..."li (1.4.10)

TOTAL ABSENCE 6 REFUTED

The theory of total absence is also proved to be incorrect in the following way. Even if there is not a jug on the ground. there still has to be something, grass or air in its place which possesses the concealed qualities of the pot. Thus, there is never a total absence of attributes. The un manifested pot exists everywhere concealed. 7

5 Enlightenment is to feel unity with all things, that the creation is Brahman. The seer Vamadeva realizing this truth, felt that he was Manu, the Father of Creation as well as in perfect unity with every thing.

6 Total absence is the theory that states "Because I don't see a pot on the ground, it does not exist."

7 As the un manifested pots exists everywhere, in the same light, the Lord exists everywhere. To prove this point, the Lord appeared out of a column in the form of Narsing, a half man lion form incarnation to save his devotee Prahlad and prove to his atheist father Hiranyakasipu that he is omnipresent. .

EVERYTHING IS BRAHMAN AND NOTHING BUT BRAHMAN

All things are identical and present everywhere because everything is Brahman. This is Shuddha Brabmavada, 8 the theory that holds that everything is Brahman and nothing but Brahman.

BRAHMAN, THE CAUSE AND EFFECT

Brahman is the cause of everything and the whole world is Brahmans effect. This concept is explained in the Brahma Sutra passages: "The Supreme Self was the agent as well as the object of creation. The creation is a modification of Him self... The creation of the world is like the unfolding of a cloth. 9 (1.4.26,2.1.19)

Sri Vallabhacharya agrees with this statement in his Tattvapanibhandha, "The world appears from and is concealed in the Lord. l0 (Shastrarth, 68)

8 Shuddha Brahmanvada is one of the names of Vallabhacharyas philosophical system which means that everything is God and no thing but God. It is also referred to as Shuddha Addvaita, pure non dualism.

9 Like gold becomes different ornaments and is ca]led a ring, earrings etc., Brahman, while multiplying and expanding Itself throughout the creation, takes on numerous names and forms.

10 In the realm of Indian thought, there are numerous ways of addressing the Supreme, depending on the context. Certain names refer to the Supremes personal aspect like Bhagavan, while the term Brahman can refer to his impersonal aspect. In the broad light of Shri Vallabhacharys teachings, the supreme can be both personal and impersonal, but in terms of devotion, the Lords personal form is droned. When the Yogi Uddhava tried to teach the dairy maids of Braja about the absolute, he explained...

"Untouched by the three qualities,
no hands, no feet, no nose, voice or ears.
lust imperishable light, radiant...
The Gopis replied,
"If he has no mouth, then who ate the butter ?
If no feet, how did he run with the cows ?
Who held up the Govardhana hill ?
It was Nanda and Yashodas son,
Krishna, the Lord of Braja, (Nandadas Bhramar Gita)

THE CAUSE AND EFFECT

The sub cause of the pot, etc.. is explained in the following "way: Both a pot and the clay, from which it is made, are Gods forms. The pot exists in the clay, its cause, because the Lord wills such a relationship between his two forms. Thus, when from one of the Lords forms (i.e. clay) another form manifests, ‚(i.e. a pot) the first should be known as the sub. cause and the second as the sub effect.

Sri Vallabhacharya summarizes this sub cause effect relation ship, "Clay, one of the Lords forms, becomes a pot which is .also His form." (3.14.1)

The Lord supports the same concept when he says in the Bhagavat "you should clearly understand that whatever is Perceived through mind, speech, sight, and other senses is all ‚Me and nothing but Me." (11.13.24)

MAYA, A DELUDING POTENCY OF THE LORD .

Maya is a power of the Lord which deludes. It produces an image of an object in a persons mind which resembles in some way real objects of the world. These mayic objects are then projected into real objects. Thus, when real objects of the world are perceived through this distorted vision, a miscognition of the world registers in the mind of the beholder.

The following Bhagavata passages elucidate the concept of maya.

"Uddhaa, whatever you perceive as perishable through the mind, speech, eyes, ears, etc., know them to be a combination of ‚mind and maya." (11.7.7)

"The body is simply a mental construction." (11.23.50) "0 Uddhava, the threefold defect within you was not there before and will not exist afterwards. It is an illusive

11 The three material qualities are Tamas, Rajas, and Sattva which can very loosely be translated as ignorance, passion and purity. Because each of the three qualities are like a magician hat from which many diversified meanings can be pulled, I have not tried to trans late them throughout the text, but have left them in their original Sanskrit form.

curtain Like interval coming between the beginning and the end. through the agency of maya." (11.19.7) .

Because of diminishing intellect, this world appears as a. dream and is a source of pain after pain. (10.14.22)

MAYAVADIANS VIEW OF THE WORLD

Mayavadians believe the world itself to be illusory and argue that it appears through mind cum maya.12 Shri Vallabhacarya explicates the Puranic passages which speak of the world as being mayic by revealing in his Tattvadipanibandha that those 0::; statements are intended to in still detachment from the mayic world rather than to establish the falseness of the real world.

MAYAS SPELL

Under the spell of maya, people view things falsely as. illusory when actually the things are free from defect. In this light, the Lord said to the creator Brahma in the Bhagavata, "What is perceived through miscognition and noncognition are both the images of maya, like a reflection or darkness." (2.9.23)

ILLUSORY EXPERIENCE, NOT TRUTH

Shri Vallabhacharya expounds on the above mentioned passage in his Subodhini, "The confused mind does not perceived objects as they really are."

12 The Mayavadins are generally considered to be followers of Shanklitracharya, an incarnation of Lord Shiva who appeared to teach the deluding doctrine that the world is false. a product of maya. His teaching, not in the spirit of the Vedanta. were later disproved by the other great Vaishnavas teachers; but his teachings have had a strong influence on many Indian yoga practices. Vallabhacharya con tends that maya occurs in an object because of incorrect perception. due to the faculty of intellect. Mayavadins say that regardless of the state of intellect. the perception of a object in the world is due to maya.

13 Micognition is explained in the following way. To mistake a real person for his reflection. Non cognition is the inability to perceive an object in a dark from. This is explained further in text.

Later in the same commentary, the true nature of all objects :and the world is revealed, "The Vedas, the scriptural authority, "state, this is all Brahman."

Those who have the knowledge of Brahman experience, this truth. Illusory experience does not perceive this truth. A person who is dizzy from spinning sees the world spinning, an incorrect cognition of the world. Therefore, we must distinguish the cognised imaginary aspect of the object from its true nature so that the miscognition may have some corresponding entity, otherwise, the illusion of the spinning world would have no explanation .14

Shri Vallabhacharya clearly explains this concept in his Subodhini. "The cognised imaginary aspect of the object is a :product of maya. The actual object is God Himself."

Those who have not realized Brahman see real objects inter twined with an imaginary aspect of the object. For instance, .a dizzy person sees stable jug is moving. The form and the size of the jug God, while the spinning of the stable jug is due 10 the cognised imaginary aspect of the object.

The experience of origination, annihilation, ugliness, difference, etc., are also the cognised imaginary aspects of the object. They are mayic appearances like the real stable pot that spins. Anything seen properly is not mayic. Shri Vallabhacharya explains clearly in his Subodhini the Bhagavata passage, "That which appears without objective

14 This logic is used against Shankaracharya because he claims that the world is an imaginary reflection of the real Brahman, but the question arises, how can something real produce something which is imaginary. For him, whether the world is spinning or standing still. it is still mayic. Vallabhacharya distinguishes the mayic aspect of the world. its appearance of spinning due to dizziness from the real stable world. Because Shankaracharya has called the world mayic. he has come under heavy attack. Perhaps if he did not call his system Vedic. no one would have minded his views quite as much but be .cause he twisted the meaning of the scriptures to fit, his own system. ,and on the real stage of the world. burst in the middle of the first act claiming, ".It is all false" he was booed by many in the crowd. He was also able to draw a huge following.

ground through miscognition and noncognition are both the images of maya, like a reflection or darkness," (2.9.33) by saying, "Knowledge derived from the imaginary aspect of the object is erroneous. Knowledge rooted in the real object is a valid, cognition."

NONCOGNITION AND MISCOGNITION

Vallabhacharya has described the twofold imaginary aspect. of the object :
I. Noncognition conceals reality like the experience or darkness which prevents vision. "It hides the real identity between the world and Brahman." (Subodhini,. 2.9.33)

2. Miscognition misrepresents reality like the reflection or a face in a mirror which is taken to be the real face. "It gives a misrepresentation of the real world... (Subodhini, 2.9.33) When Vallabhacharya says in his Subodhini 2.9.33, "The world is a cognised imaginary object," be is not referring to the real world, a form of Brahman. The distinction must be made. between where "an object is the Lord," (Subodhini, 2.9.23) and. "a cognised imaginary object caused by maya." (Subodhini, 2.9.33) If not, a contradiction would arise, because Brahman. cannot be a cognised imaginary aspect of an object and still be the real world. Vallabhacharyas statement should be understood to mean that there are some characteristics in a cognised imaginary object that appear like the real world. For instance, like the cognised imaginary darkness that resembles a real dark colored object in the world.

MAYIC ATTRIBUTES AND SUBSTRATUM

It is of specific importance to note that maya sometimes: creates a cognition of an imaginary aspect of an object in the form of attributes and sometimes in the form of substratum. For example, when some one is spinning, he perceives the stable

pot as moving The spinning is a mayic attribute. In the absence of light there appears a darkness which is a mayic substratum.

THE WORLD AS SEEN BY KNOWER OF BRAHMANS –

This world appears in three ways according to the eligibility. of the perceiver. Those who has realized Brahman, see the world as Brahmans form, absolutely pure. The perception of a real white object as white ex amplifies the person who has realized Brahman.

THE WORLD AS SEEN BY KNOWERS OF SCRIPTURE AND THE IGNORANT

Those who have acquired scriptural knowledge view the world as a mixture of mayic and Brahmic qualities. They can distinguish between the attributes of Brahman and mayas. They view reality as a white cloth with a thin green cloth in front of it. They correctly see its size and shape but its colour appears green. They know it is white but do not see it so.

For those who are totally ignorant, the world appears as a confusion of maya and Brahmans attributes. They cannot discern between the two.

DIFFERENCE IN APPEARANCE, NOT IN ESSENCE

A child who wears green glasses perceives a white cloth& size but not its true colour. He has not perceived that the green is superimposed on the white cloth. Thus, it is proven that there is a difference in the cloths appearance but not in its essence. Therefore, it should be accepted as true by all those . who accept the authority of the scriptures that the world is identical with Brahman. The attributes of origination, annihilation, ugliness and mutual distinction, etc., should be considered, by the wise to be mayic. 15

15 As the white cloth perceived green is still a real cloth, similarly, those who view the real world through mayic vision, see a world different in appearance from the real one, but not in essence.

NO MAYA IN THE DEITY

The Lords Deity is different from other objects in the world. When a person devoid of devotion sees such a form, maya causes a cognised imaginary image to arise in his mind that is different from the deity. Maya can delude the observers mind so he sees the deity as a mere statue but cannot project itself in the deity.

Because the deitys being is not mundane but divine it has been said that, "Those who consider the water that has washed the feet of Vishnus deity or his devotees and removes the impurities of the Kali age as ordinary water are doomed."

THE DEITY, GODS OWN FORM

It has been said in the scriptures, "0 Narada, Vishnu is full of knowledge and bliss, the doer of unthinkable deeds. One should never think that His deity is a mere stone."

Other scriptural passages tell that the deity charged with the Lords divinity should be given special respect and should be accepted as different from mundane objects.

In the Bhagavata the deity is praised, "The sight, touch and worship of my deity or my devotee" (is blessed).

The Kalanirnayadipika narrates, "The adoration of my deity is an excellent practice."

Vallabhacharya in his Tattvadipanibandha explains, "In the absence of a qualified guru, the devotee should initiate himself for Haris worship in the form of a deity." (Sarvanirnaya, 228)

Shri Vallabhacharya commenting on his own statement says, "In the broad light of Brahmavada, if we think about the nature of things, then, everything is the Lords form. The distinguishing aspects of the Lords deity is that the Lord determines, I will liberate the soul through this deity and then;. appears in the form of clay and other materials." 16

16. Although, according to Brahmavada, the Lord resides everywhere, the initiated soul worship the Lords deity and realizing divinity, there, begins to see it everywhere.

Other passages also prove that the Lords deity is distinct from worldly objects. For this reason in the eleventh canto of the Bhagavata, the Lord explains to Uddhava in detail the ,process of worshipping the Lords deity.

SACRED PEOPLE, WATER AND OBJECTS

The Yamuna and Ganges rivers, the other holy waters, the Tulsi plant, Gopichandana 17 and other sacred objects as went as the Lords devotees are also set apart from other material objects. Accepting this truth, on the strength of the above mentioned passages many devotees have apprehended in these objects of devotion attributes that are useful in liberation.

The Puranas and other scriptures have confirmed that many people have realized God through the Lords deity and other sacred objects.

Scriptural doctrine should be explained according to the words of the scripture. Here dry logic has no place.

BODY IS NOT THE SOUL

It can be argued that if everything is composed of Brahman then the material body is also Brahman. If it is Brahman, someone might then conclude that our bodies are souls, but this could not be a valid inference. This thought is scorned in the Bhagavata and other scriptures because the soul resides in the heart.

Those who do not have knowledge of Brahman, clutch to their perishable bodies thinking them to be the Soul. Because they are infatuated by maya, their concepts are denounced in all scriptures.

Only an individual who realizes Brahman everywhere perceives the body as Brahman. Their feelings are clear, their ..cognition valid. The Brahma Sutra echoes their realization, "This world is a result of the Lord."

Confusion of the body and soul occurs only when the body ,,;s considered a creation different from God.

17 Sacred sands found near Dwarka in Gujarat.

THE WORLD OF ME AND MINE

If you believe that the world is real. then how do you explain the passages from the Bhagavata, "0 Lord, in you who are one without a second, occurs the entire creation, a mere phantom," (10.59.30) and other similar passages ?

In reply to this, it should be understood that such passages refer to the world which is a product of me and mine and not the actual real world. Actually, the world is real and comprised of Brahman. Due to Iness and myness, it becomes false. This. tenet has been thoroughly explained in Tattvarthadipanibandha... and in other works. Those who have keen interest should. consult them.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

THE SOUL, AN ATOMIC, IDENTICAL PART OF BRAHMAN

Now the nature of the soul will be explained. The following passages establish the truth that the soul is identical with and an atomic unit of Brahman.

"0 Shvetaketu, you (the soul)are that Brahman." (Chandogya Upanishad, 6.8.7).

"The atomic soul can be known through the mind." (Mundaka Upanisad, 3.1.9).

"In the world of beings, souls are all My parts." (Gita 15.7).

"The soul is not atomic because the Sruties have describe it in another fashion."

"Untrue, Souls are allpervasive in that they are part or Brahman, but they are atomic." (Brahma Sutra, 2.3.21)

"The wise seers do not see any difference between you, Lord, and Me soul)." (Bhagavata, 4.28.62)

THE SOULS THREE STAGES

The soul has three phases, pure, bound, and liberated.

1 Akshara Brahman is the imperishable attribute less impersonal aspect of the Supreme reality. It is often spoken of as the effulgence or the foundation of the Lords Supreme realm. Although it is the abode of liberation, its aspect of bliss is somewhat limited, while the Lords realm. which is filled with divine form, is infinite in its quality of

From Akshara Brahman, souls emerge as atomic with the three properties of being, consciousness and bliss. The Braharanayaka Upanishad describes this phenomenon with the .analogy sparks spray from a fire, souls shoot forth from Akshara Bahman." (2.1.20)

THE SOUL CONSCIOUSNESS AND CONCEALED BLISS

Akshara Brahman forms a pure blissful tranquil aura .around the Lord. At the time of emotion, souls are pure particles of Akshara Brahman but according to the Lords wish, bliss is concealed from the soul. Though it is a unconditioned .atomic unit of Akshara Brahman it becomes a bound soul with 4 ;consciousness and concealed bliss predominating.

FIRST THE BLISS IS CONCEALED

It is mentioned in the Vedastuti in the Bhagavata that, "Our bodies, created by the Lord, are towns were the soul resides." (10.86.20)

On this passage, Sri Vallabhacharya comments in his Subodhini; "Souls are conscious and are a part of the Lord."

This same concept is clarified in the Vedanta Sutra, (3.3.5). "The bliss aspect if first concealed, at which time the atomic :part of Akshara Brahman becomes a bound soul."

bliss. Because the creation of the world has come form Akshara Brahman the creation is considered another form of Akshara .Brahman While Yogis and other spiritual seekers of ten adorn Aksbara Brahman, those steeped in the path of Bhakti (devotion) worship the Lords personal form, but also have knowledge of Akshara Brahman. When the Yogi Uddhava tried to teach the Gopis of Braja who were steeped in the personal worship of God, to meditate upon Akshara Brahman, thy replied him in Nandadas Bhramar Gita,

.Uddhava, whal is this knowledge of Brahman effulgence ?

What are you saying ?

Our love for the fair Krishna is the straight path.

His eyes, speech mouth and nose...

Krishna form we see.

All our sense of the mundane world, Krishna flute snatches away casting loves spell.

Commenting on that passage, Sri Vallabhacharya adds, "First means before the six divine qualities of Lordship etc., are concealed from the soul, the aspect of bliss is hidden from .

BLISS CREATES FORM

Sri Vallabhacharya says "Souls are identical with the Lord and possess divine form, but because the Lord emanates them with the desire of acquiring high and low forms, they become formless." (Shastrartha, 26)

Here formless means lack of blissful form. fu the system of Brahmavada, bliss generates form.

Question ": How can the soul emanate from Brahman, who is all pervasive ?

Answer: Although Brahman is ubiquitous, he is the foundation of all contradictory attributes and therefore emanation is possible. The Upanishad says, "Souls emanate from Brahman". (Braharanayaka,2.1.20)

EVERYTHING IS BRAHMAN

The entire creation has emanated from Brahman Souls are Brahman and develop into Brahmic .dimensions. The act of emanation is also Brahmic. There is no fault here for the Chandogya Upanishad agrees, Brahman is all this." (3.14.1)

The Bhagavata (l0.85.4) explains it in the following way. "Wherever, whenever, in whatever way, to whomever, for whomever and in whatever form, everything including the material and spiritual nature with their controller is the Lord Himself."

THE PURE AND BOUND SOUL

After the parts emanate from Brahman, the bliss aspect is, concealed and those parts become bound souls. Before their

2 The six divine qualities are potency, Lordship, fame, beauty, know ledge and renunciation.

contact with ignorance, the soul is called a pure soul. In this vein, the Laxshmi Tantra states, "Pure consciousness and being is the nature of the soul."

The soul is pure when it is not in contact with ignorance.

Then, as is explained in the Brahma Sutra, "Through the wish of the Supreme, the souls six divine qualities become concealed and hence falls further into bondage from which it "can ultimately be liberated." (3.2.5)

ELIGIBILITY FOR LIBERATION

The Lord, desiring to support, became many. He implanted :a subtle aptitude, a qualification for liberation in some souls. Ibis is their divinity which alone can grant them liberation.

Lord Krishna says in this connection in the Gita, "Those endowed with the divine quality are qualified for liberation." ,{16.5)

THE SOULS BONDAGE

After coming into contact with ignorance, the soul falls into bondage as explained in the Bhagavata. "The soul comes into beginning less bondage through ignorance. " (11. 1 1.4)

This beginning less is not in the absolute sense, but in relation to subsequent events. For instance, even demigods are called immortal, but they are not so in the absolute sense of the term. This has been fully exp]ained in Sri Vitthalanathas Vidvanmandanam.

FIVE KNOTS OF IGNORANCE CAUSE MISERY

In Vallabhacharyas Nibandha, Shastrarth Prakarana it is explained that, "Confusion of the soul with the body, with the internal and external organs, with vital breath, with the faculty of cognition, and with the oblivion of ones own nature are the five knots of ignorance. When the soul is tied with these five knots it descends into misery ."

For this reason in the Shastrartha (23) Sri Vallabhacharya .enlightens, "The soul suffers the socalled samsara. Actually. it does not happen because it is all merely imagination..

THE LIBERATING FIVE CORDS OF WISDOM

In the Shastrarth Prakarana Vallabhacharya says, "A wise person who has acquired the five cords or wisdom. renunciation, Sankya3. Yoga4, austerities and devotion to Sri Krishna enters Hari.

According to scripture, a soul will be considered in bondage to Samsara until it makes these acquisitions. Then. it will be treated as a liberated soul.

TWO TYPES OF LIBERATED SOULS

Liberated souls are of two types. One is liberated in the world while the other only after leaving the world. Souls like Sanaka who are forever untouched by ignorance are of the first variety. Sols residing in the divine abode, apart from the allpervasive Vaikunthas (eternal realms within material spheres) are called liberated souls in divine abodes. Through the Lords supreme grace, both types of souls become pure Brahman. This is their final beatitude.

DIVINE SOULS LIBERATION

Some of the highest divine souls receive enlightening association and develop an inclination for the Blessed Path of Devotion. Then with the aid of listening and chanting the Lords glories, an independent type of devotion blossoms which

3 One of the six systems of philosophy attributed to Kapildeva. It enumerates that liberation is achieved by distinguishing the 24 elements in the phenomenal creation, (prakrita) from the soul or spirit, (purusha).

4 The system established by Patanjalai with its eight different limbs through " which the soul can become united through deep concentration of mind with the Supreme.

is a fruit in itself. Through that devotion, they enter the Lords eternal lila . This is their liberation.

MUNDANE SOULS

After the concealment of the six divine attributes, souls who are not divine in nature come into contact with ignorance. They become lowly and are not eligible for liberation. Possessing unvirtuous aptitudes, they are made demonic by the Lord. These devilish souls, due to unrighteousness acquire gross bodies befitting their natures. They become addicted to denouncable deeds and take low births. They remain forever in samsara.

Lord Krishna in the Gita speaks of these souls. "I continually throw those inauspicious souls into lower demonical births. (17.19)

"Having continually achieved demonical birth, those foolish souls not reaching Me, sink to the lowest depths." (17.20)

DEMONICAL SOULS LIBERATION

When the Lord desires to sport with Himself. He destroys all effects of ignorance (e.g. samsara) connected with all types of souls disregarding their pious or sinful deeds. Then, even demonical souls have all their defects removed and become pure.

Through various processes of concealment, the Lord produces infinite variation in the material and conscious world. When the Lord desires to remove these differences. He manifests His consciousness and bliss aspects everywhere. At that time, even in demonic souls perfect bliss in manifested. The material nature of the world is then merged into the Lord, who remains .One without a second. At that time, Akshara Brahman is also .united with the Supreme Being. This phenomenon is related in the Bhagavata, "What remains is Me alone." (2;9,32)

In another passage Devaki says, "You alone remain acquiring all names." (10.3.25)

This state Sri Va1labhacharya explains in his Subodhini, and summaries ill his Shastrartha (24), "When Krishna decided to sport with Himself, a mergance occurs which gives joy to all souls."

SOULS IN THE PATH OF GRACE

Godly souls are divided into two groups. One belongs to the Path of Grace, the other follows the Path of Law. 5

In this connection, Sri Vallabhacharya states in his Pusti pravamaryadabheda, "Undoubtedly, souls of the Path of Grace are different from all other souls." (Line 12)

The differentiating factor in the Path of Grace is the unconditioned seed of grace. It is implanted by the Lord before the soul comes into contact with any ignorance and after giving the soul divine aptitude. The Lord bestows the fruit of the Path of Grace upon those souls He wishes to shower special grace. This will be described in the chapter which deals with eligibility.

SOULS OF THE PATH OF LAW

Souls that belong to the Path of Law vary because of their different practices of knowledge, devotion, yoga and karma. The Virtuous Scriptures have described these practices in many different ways to suit the various practitioners who are qualified for liberation.

LIBERATION, A COMMON RESULT

Emancipation is a common result for both types of divine souls. Sri Vallabhacharya supports this in his Pustipavahamaryadabheda, "Both types of divine souls achieve liberation."(11)

The difference in the liberation for the divine soul who follows the Path of Grace and for the divine soul who observes the Path of Law will be explained later.

S Souls who have an aptitude for grace receive the Lords persona! association while those divine souls controlled by law, follow the scriptures and achieve the fruits therein described.

THE SOUL, LIKE SANDAL PASTE, PREVAILS / THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE BODY

Question: If souls are believed to be atomic in nature, then how is it possible that consciousness prevails throughout the entire body ? This contradicts the souls atomic nature.

Answer: This is not the case because in the Brahma Sutra it is mentioned, "There is no contradiction in the atomic soul which emanates consciousness throughout the body. It is like the sandal paste which when applied to one part of the body, cools the entire body."

THE SOUL IS IN THE HEART

Question: One can feel the sandal paste applied upon one part of the body, while its coolness is perceived all over the body enables us to conceive this special power of the paste. But because one cannot feel the exact location of the soul, the example of sandal paste is not a proper analogy.

Answer: The holy scriptures answer this question revealing, "What is the soul within the vital organs ? It is filled with consciousness and resides within the heart as its eternal flame." (Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, 4.3.7)

"That soul resides within the heart." (Chandogya Upanisad, 8.3.31)

"That soul indeed resides within the heart." (Prashna Upanjsad, 3.6) ,

These texts prove that, as the sandal paste is applied to one part of the body and is felt throughout, so the soul resides within the heart, yet consciousness is felt throughout the body.

THE SOULS CONSCIOUSNESS PERVADES LIKE FRAGRANCE

The Brahma Sutra argues, "Sandal paste has the quality to cool the whole body but the soul does not possess an analogous power."

The same text then answers: "The soul resides in the heart and permeated consciousness throughout the body," (23.24)

and is further explained in the following way.

The Mahanarayana Upanisad states, "As a flowering tree , .emanates its fragrance to far away places, so the fragrance or virtuous deeds reached to distant locations.

Similarly, consciousness transcends the confines of the atomic soul."

The soul which lives in the heart spreads its consciousness throughout the body, therefore the Brahma Sutra says, "This analogy of sandal paste and the soul can be understood from the example of smell." (2.3.23)

"This is all questionable because the Campaka flower fragrance transcends the area of its actual material form only because of the movement of its pollen." ..

This is not a proper argument because hing (Asafoetida), which is covered in a leather pouch, where there is no possibility for its particles to escape, can still be smelled from a distance. Also, after you touch an onion, even if you wash your hands many times, the smell of the onion still lingers even though no onion particles remain on the hand. This has all been explained:by Vitthalanatha in his Vidvanmandanam. ,

THE SOUL IS ATOMIC

Argument: In the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad it is said, "The Great Birth less is the soul." (4.4.22) ,

This passage does not indicate that the soul is atomic in nature.

Answer: No. The Brahma Sutra explains you should not. doubt the atomic character of the soul because of that passage. The Brhadaraxyaka Upanisad says that to describe the soul as being allpervasive is in connection with Brahman and not on
its own accord 6 (2.3.21)

So, the soul is atomic.

6. Although the soul is a part of Brahman, it does not have all r Brahmans attributes. For instance, It is unable to carry on the working of the creation The consciousness of the soul is felt only within the boundaries of a single body, while Brahmans consciousness is felt everywhere.

SURCHARGED WITH THE LORDS ATTRIBUTES

In the Gita it is said, "The soul is eternal, allpervasive, immovable, static, arid eternal."

From this passage. it is again proven that the soul is not atomic but omnipresent.

This is not the case and is clarified in the Mundaka Upanisad. "The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman."

According to this passage, the knower of Brahman becomes, charged with the attributes of the Lord and feels His pervasive. ness, which is referred to in the Gita. Sri Vallabhacharya agrees. in his Nibanda, "The scriptural description of the allpervasiveness of the soul is justified by God realization." 7

CONTRADICTION DUE TO BRAHMAN

At the time of realization, when all pervasiveness is felt,. does it not falsify the atomic nature of the soul.

No. Because Brahman is the abode of all contradictory attributes, it can be both atomic and allpervasive at the same; time. This has been explained in the Nibandha. "The atomic. Brahman can also be allpervasive. Krishna sits in his mother Yashodas lap and founds the entire creation."8 (Shastrartha 54),

CONSCIOUSNESS PERVASIVE THROUGHOUT THE BODY

Therefore, the soul is atomic, its consciousness permeates; the entire body. This truth is revealed in the following passages.

"Consciousness is an attribute of the soul like light is an.

7 While the bonded soul can not feel the oneness of the soul with everything, the liberated soul feels that it is a. part of Brahman and experiences Brahman everywhere.

8 As Krishna can be Yashodas child as well as the cause and effect of the entire creation, similarly, the realized soul, although atomic in unit, resides within the heart but can be felt everywhere. A light bulb that sheds light to four corners of a room is pervasive in effect, but still has a definite size and location. The same is true: with the soul. It location and effect is understood with realization.

attribute of the sun. Souls illuminate (the body) with their own consciousness." (Narada Pancharatra, Laxmi Tantra)

"As sparks shoot from a fire." (Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, 2.1.20)

"The lowcaste fisherman and immoral cheaters are Brahman." (Brahma Sutra) This passage cannot be explained Unless we admit that souls are apart of Brahman." 9

From this it is clear beyond any doubt that the soul is a part of Brahman. –

9 .Where everything Is Brahman and nothing but Brahman, not even Satan can escape from being a part of Brahman. Similarly, the low caste fishermen. who make their living by killing, as well as immoral ,cheaters, are also a part of Brahman, all created for the cosmic play.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRIMORDIAL NATURE OF GOD

KRISHNA, BEING AND BLISS

"Now we proceed to inquire about the primordial nature or God.

"The primordial nature is Krishna whose etymology is krs,. which means being, and *na,* which translates as bliss. By joining these two roots w have Krishna, a name of Brahman."

KRISHNA IS GOD

Krishnas divinity is described in the following passages.

"Om, that truth, the Supreme Brahman, bodies Krishna who is eternal bliss; so am I. Those who meditate on Brahman relish Him and worship Him " (Gopalottra)

"Om, Gopala (Krishna) is the only supreme uncontradicted, truth." (Gopalapurva 1)

"0 Arjuna, nothing is superior to me I am even greater than the impersonal causal form of Brahman, Akshara Brahman." (Gita, 7.7, 15.18)

"The Supreme Brahman is Krishna alone." (Siddhantmuktavali 3 by Vallabhacharya) ,

From these passages the conclusion is drawn that Krishna is the Supreme Lord. l

1 All incarnations are a part of Krishna. It is for this reason that each incarnation is adorned according to a specific practice. whether it be meditation, renunciation, or any other means. Krishna alone

(Contd.)

DEVOID OF MUNDANE LIMBS

Krishna embodies supreme being, consciousness and bliss. He is devoid of mundane limbs, hands and feet etc. The following passages support this.

"He runs quickly and grabs without hands and feet." (Svetasvatara Upanisad, 3.19)

"He is bright without vital breath or mind." (Mundaka Upanisad, 2.1.2)

THE FOUNDATION OF DIVINE QUALITIES

The following passages and other texts support the truth that the Lord possesses all transcendental attributes.

" I salute Krishna. He is being, consciousness and bliss and performs all deeds effortlessly. Krishna is the subject matter of the Vedanta, the supreme guru, and witness of the intellect." (Gopalopurvata Upanisad, 2)

.His hands and feet are everywhere." (Svetasvatara Upanisad,3.16)

"The Lords hands, feet, face, stomach, etc. all embody bliss." (Shveta Upanisad, 3.16)

"Kabja, the hunchback lady, left her anxiety and embraced Krishnas blissful form." (Bhagavata)

"The Lord is part less, action less and tranquil... (Sveta Upanisad, 3.19)

"The Lord is comprised of all desires and smell." (Chando gya Upanisad, 3.14.2)

"The Lord is the foundation of everything and has maya under His control. He possesses the supreme blissful form and is different than all other. worldly objects." (Shastrartha 6) .

NO MUNDANE ATTRIBUTES

The scriptures negate the existence of mundane forms and may be "domed in any way, even through hatred. The only pre requisite is that the feeing be directed toward him. What Yogis have difficulty achieving after lifetimes of practice, Krishna gave to the demo ness Putna who tried to kill him.

attributes in Brahman. Those scriptures which ascribe form and attributes to the Lord, ascribe only transcendental, eternal, scriptural qualities and forms to Brahman. With this interpretation there is no contradiction. So, Vallabhacharya says in his Anubhasya, "you can negate something you know, but you" " cannot negate that which you do not know, nor what is known throughout the scriptures." (1.1.2)

ETERNAL SPORTS

Krsna occupies the supreme position in Vallabhacharyas philosophy. He is called the Supreme Person and eternally manifests all divine qualities. All of his sports are eternal. In this reference, Sukadeva says in the Bhagavata, "The third to eleventh cantos of the Bhagavata clarify the meaning of the twelfth canto." 2 (2.10.2)

In Nibandha, Vallabhacharya states, "The Supreme person has nine types of sports." 3

In the Bhagavatarth Vallabhacharya says, "Sri Krishna, who embodies the supreme bliss, is always performing ten different types of lilas." 4 (I)

In abodes like Vrndavana, Mahavana, Vaippi Vaikuntha,5 etc., the Lord always regards with his devotees in his various forms (e.g. two and fourarmed, etc.)" 6

2 The twelfth canto of the Bhagavata is called "asbraya" that is taking the Lords shelter. To demonstrate how this is attained, the 3rd to 11th canto have been revealed and are all extensions of that divine shelter.

3 The third to the eleventh canto in the Bhagavata depict one sport in each chapter.

4 The ten different lilas are sarga, visarga, sthan, poshan, uti. mana vanter, ishankatha, nirodha. and ashraya. They represent the third to the twelve cantos of the Bhagavata and depict the different ways the Lord sports with his creations. For further discussion, see Vallabhacharya Bhagavatarth Nibandha.

5 Vrindavan and Mahvan are forests in the sacred realm of Braja, Vaippi Vaikuntha are eternally liberated realms within material ,creations.

6 Krishna in his twoarmed form is called Bal Krishna, Gokul Chand iramaji, and Shri Nathji, to mention a few. In his fourarmed form. He is Mathureshji, Dwarkanathji, Gokulnathji, an d called by many .other names as well.

The Brahmavaivarta Purana says, in this connection, ."Krishna is complete in Vaikuntha as well as in Gokul. In Vaikuntha He has four arms and in Gokul He has two."

From these statements and others we see that Krishna is "comprised of supreme bliss.

"He is rasa, the divine blissful mood... Then the soul reaches towards the Supreme Soul, who is full of bliss. (Taittiriya Upanisad, 2.7,2.8)

"The Supreme Soul is said to be full of bliss because it is so .described repeatedly in the texts." (Brahma Sutra, 1.1.11)

The Supreme Person pervades all forms, from the body .which is a product of food, to the allblissful form." (Bhagavata, 10.87.17)

"Lord Krishna, who resides in the ocean of his own bliss, should be contemplated." (Siddhantmuktiivali 15)
These divine aspects of God are also clearly explained in the "Vedanta Sutra and in Vallabhacharyas Sri Subodhini.

HE WISHED TO BECOME MANY

Because of the Lords wishes, a form manifested, the primal cause of all causes, which is described in the Taitti Upanisad .(2.6) as, "He wished to become many."

APPEARANCE OF AKSHARA BRAHMAN

The quality of bliss became concealed within the Lord and the form of Akshara Brahman manifested. It can appear in .three ways, according to the eligibility of the soul.
1. As Krishna. .
2. As the impersonal Brahman.
3. The foundation of Gods abode.

AKSHAKA BRAHMAN FOR BHAKTAS

" For bhaktas, Akshara Brahman appears as the abode, the .d welling place of the Supreme Person, the omnipresent Vaikuntha. and other divine spheres. That is why in the Gita the Lord says, "The unmanifested Akshara Brahman is the final destiny.

It is my supreme abode. One .who reaches It, never returns. to this world." (8.21)

Akshara Brahman is mentioned in the Bhagavata. "The: Lord showed the cowlads his abode which is above the darkness. of the material nature. What is filled with being, knowledge,and infinity, as well as eternal light is called Akshara Brahman."" (10.28.1415)

Vallabhacarya explains the same concepts in his Sarvanirnaya. "To devotees, when the Lord appears as the master Akshara Brahman seems to them like the Lords abode, His. foundation." (102)

QUALITIES CONCEALED IN AKSHARA BRAHMAN

Bhaktas see Akshara Brahman with some divine qualities. but devoid of other Godly attributes 7.

Question: How is it possible for qualities to be concealed in Akshara Brahman since concealment is rooted in ignorance and Akshara Brahman is beyond ignorance ?

Answer: Dont doubt like that. Vallabhacharya explains. "The power of concealment and manifestation are Lord Krishnas powers, above ignorance." (Sarvanirnaya 140)

Question : Concealment is the nonfunction, nonappearance: of an existing thing. In the allknowing Brahman, nonappearance IS not possible. Understand it in this light. Before creation,. there were no souls. At that time, one cannot say they are concealed for they didnt even exist.

Answer: The meaning of concealment here is when an existing thing does not function to its full potential: For example,. the Lords power to cause the universal destruction is present. during the period of the worlds preservation, but is inactive". concealed. In this sense we say the bliss of the world is concealed, not nonexistent.

7 Because bhaktas relish the Lords personal attributes, the playing of the flute. Krishnas dance under the full moon and other divine sports. Akshara Brahman, being devoid of this sporting appears to be devoid of Godly attributes.

NONAPPEARANCE

Concealment in the form of the nonappearance of a real existing thing is due to Maya. It happens to a bonded souls. and is a different type of concealment then the above mentioned Lords concealment power which is free from the effects of maya.8

AKSHARA BRAHMAN FOR THE FOLLOWERS OF THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

Followers of the Path of Knowledge perceive Akshara Brahman as being, consciousness, and bliss, transcending time and place, selfilluminating, and beyond material qualities. The Brahma Sutra explains their position. "Knowledge appears in the hearts of those who follow the Path of Knowledge through their own efforts. Krishnas Supreme realm does not appear in their hearts because they have not chosen to have the divine sentiment for the Supreme Person." 9 (3.9.54)

Shri Vallabhacharya commenting on that line has classified Akshara Brahmans appearance as twofold, for those who follow the Path of Knowledge and for those who follow the Path of Grace.

For those who follow the Path of Knowledge, Akshara Brahman appears with all attributes concealed except for the power of concealment. It is for this reason that Akshara Brahman is sometimes called an attribute less Absolute.

The Bhagavata speaks of it in these terms: "That primal stage is unintelligible, like the voided experienced in dreamless. sleep." (12.4.21)

"No suffix, prefix, verb, or noun reach to Akshara Brahman. Maya, ashamed, turns away. Akshara Brahman is continuous bliss, devoid of all misery. (Bhagavata, 2.7.4748)

8 This non function is found in Akshara Brahman and means $imply devoid of divine attributes,

9 Those who worship the Lord through love perceive Him as their master, lover, child. or friend and can perceive Krishna realm. Practitioners in the Path knowledge do not acknowledge the divine attributes and choose to worship the attribute less. Thus, in the same Supreme reality, there are two different outlooks.

AKSHARA BRAHMANS SCRIPTURAL QUALITIES

Akshara Brahman is depicted as only void of mundane attributes, but does not have the divine attributes described in the scriptures. If it did possess such divine attributes, the contradiction would occur like affirming the existence of Donbeing.

Passages like the one found in the Shveta Upanisad, "Brahman has eyes, faces and mouths throughout the world," and Other passages which describe the Lords divine qualities would have to be refuted as conditioned qualities. Actually, the attributes described in the Vedas are not nonexistent, but are concealed in Akshara Brahman. Thus, Shri Vallabhacharya has explained in the second chapter of his Shri Subodhini, all types of negation in Brahman should be understood as concealment.

MISERY NOT CONCEALED IN BRAHMAN

Question: If the concealment theory is true, then the negation of misery in Brahman would mean that the misery exists but concealed ?

Answer: Misery is Mayic as is its negation. 10 Therefore, no question arises whether miseries are concealed or not in Brahman.

Some absolutists admit the absence of grossness, etc., in Brahman as false; otherwise, quality would ensue, a contradiction to their monist doctrine. 11

Mayic attributes like misery appear in a illusion. For this reason their absence is also false like the absence of a barren womans son. When the scriptures negate Gods attribute, it :should be understood that those attributes are actually concealed. In this fashion, there is no defect in the theory of concealment.

10 Where the object is false its appearance should also be understood as false. A real object can only have a real absence. Therefore, since the misery is a false appearance so is its absence.

11 If they accepted the absence of grossness in Brahman, grossness would have to be accepted as something real and that would be unacceptable because according to them, grossness, i.e., the material would, does not truly exist, therefore it cannot even be absent.

TRANSCENDENTAL AKSHARA BRAHMAN

Akshara Brahman is a form of Brahman wherein all powers.; are concealed. It transcends every interaction. Krishna speaks. of It in the Gita. " Akshara Brahman is indestructible, un manifested, omnipresent, unthinkable, static, immovable, and permanent." (Gita, 12.3)

THE THREE FORMS OF BRAHMAN

1. One form of Brahman is Sri Krishna, referred to as Purushottam, the Supreme Person. Akshara Brahman is perceived in other two ways.

2. Those who follow the Path of Knowledge see Akshara Brahman as the impersonal Brahman in Its causal form.

3. Devotees experience Akshara Brahman as the abode, the.. foundation of God.

THE INNER CONTROLLER

Besides these three forms of Brahman, the Supreme Person exists as antaryami, the inner controller of all forms as well as of the divinities which preside over the sun, earth, and other heavenly bodies. The following passages reveal the nature of: the inner controller.

."The immortal soul is your inner controller. It resides in the sun, it is the suns inner unit, yet is unknown to the sun. It governs the sun from within." (Brhdaranyaka Upanisad, 3.7.9)

"The form of Brahman as the inner controller is different from the presiding deities of the earth and sun etc. It has been referred to separately." (Brahma Sutra, 1.1.20)

"Who governs this and other worlds as well as all creatures from within is the inner controller. Your soul, the immortal inner controller, resides in the earth. It is the earths inner parts, yet the earth does not cognise it. The earth is its body and is governed from within. (Brhdaranyaka Upanisad, 3.7.9, 3.6.1}

"The inner controller within the presiding deities of the earth, and sun, etc. is the Supreme Lord because it has been ascribed:

with his qualities." (Brahma Sutra, 1.2.18)

The Brahma Sutra calls the inner controller the Supreme Person. "Vishnu, the Supreme Being, has three forms :

1. The Creator of the intellect. 12
2. Who resides within the cosmic egg.
3. Who resides within all creatures as the inner controller.

Whoever knows these three forms is liberated."

INNER CONTROLLER, SOURCE OF INCARNATION

This form of Brahman, the inner controller is the primordial from which all incarnations occur.

Commenting on the Bhagavata passage, "Now Ill narrate the Lords lila incarnation." (Bhagavata,2.6.45)

Sri Vallabhacharya says in his Subodhini. " All incarnations are of the Supreme Person, the Inner controller who transcends the universe."

in the second canto of the Bhagavata, the second type of meditation, the subtle meditation on the Inner controller is described. 13

WORSHIP OF THE INNER CONTROLLER

Vallabhacharya comments on the Bhagavata passage, "Some meditate upon the Supreme Person who resides within the heart. He measures the span from the little finger to the thumb." {Bhagavata, 2.2.8) Explaining, "Some meditators worship another form of the Lord than the One who resides within the cosmic egg. For additional spiritual excellence, they worship the Lords personal form which resides throughout the creation as the Inner controller. It is referred to as the third form."

Again Vallabhacharya comments on the Bhagavata passages, The Lord incarnated in the form of a boar in order to save the sinking earth," (Bhagavata, 2.7.1) explaining, "this passage and

12 Here intellect does not refer to the individual intellect, but to kala, karma, svabhava. prakriti. and purusha, (time, action, nature, material elements, and conscious being.)

13 The first meditation is on the gross form.

.others describe the inner controller in the form of the ten incarnations." I4

KRISHNA, THE SUPREME LORD

" All incarnations are partial manifestation of the Supreme Person Krishna." (Bhagavata, 1.3.28)

Shri Vallabhacharya comments on the above passage, "All incarnations are partial manifestations of the Supreme Person Narayana 15 who resides within the cosmic egg."

The Inner controller is described in the scriptures, "Who Resides within the sun, he is your soul the immortal Inner controller." (Brhdaranyaka Upanisad, 3.7.9)

He resides in the centre of the solar discus, seated 011 a lotus throne, wearing armlets, alligator shaped earrings, a diadem, necklace, and he holds a conch and discus. His body is a golden hue. This Narayana is to be constantly mediated upon." (Adityhrdaya 55)

" All incarnations are partial manifestations of the Supreme :Person Krishna." (Bhagavata, 1.3.28)

PARTIAL MANIFESTATION OF INNER CONTROLLER

Some passages state that the Inner Controller emanated from Akshara Brahman but those Inner Controllers are partial manifestations of the main Inner Controller. There are an infinite number of Inner Controllers, as there are souls These Inner Controllers are blisspredominated and govern only over an individual soul. Vallabhacharya comments on the Vedanta Sutra passage, "Because being, consciousness and bliss are connected only with Brahman, Brahman is the material cause "of the universe." (Brahma Sutra, 1.1.3) explaining, "Matter soul, and the Inner Controller represent the being, conscious ;and bliss aspects of Brahman."

14. The ten incarnation are the Divine Fish, the Tortoise the Boar the Dwarf, Nrising, Raffia, Buddha, Balaram, Krishna, and Kalki. ,

15. Narayana, the Primal Being is in essence Krishna.

MUNDANE AND TRANSCENDENTAL INCARNATIONS

Pure sattvika, rajas and tamas are attributes of the Lord. and are different from the mundane sattva, rajas and tamas. In this conjunction the; Bhagavata states, "Sattva is his beloved. form." (10.89.15)

"You rely upon sattva for the sustainment of the universe." (10.2.34)

" Akshara Brahman embodies a pure sativa tranquil aura around the Lord." (10.27.4) .

Sri Vallabhacharya comments on the last passage, "Sativa," rajas and tamas are the three qualities of the transcendental Lord."

The Lord moulds this transcendental sativa into different.. desired forms and incarnated upon the earth as the divine fish and boar, etc., and makes divine sport. How the Lord incarnated through these different forms can be understood by the analogy of fire which enters an iron ball and makes in glowing red hot.

TRANSCENDENTAL INCARNATION

When the Lord incarnates on the transcendental level He , produces a body of pure sativa and enters it with the desire to sustain the world like fire enters an iron ball. He then becomes, Vishnu. .Similarly, when the Lord enters a transcendental body of rajas, or tamas, He becomes the Creator Brahma and the Destroyer Shiva respectively.

These three transcendental incarnations are not comprised of mundane qualities but are made of the three transcendental, attributes of the Lord.

Vishnu reveals his slight superiority over Brahma and Shiva although technically alt three are equal incarnation. In this reference the Bhagavata states, "Of three deities, Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva, Vishnu offers more spiritual excellence to mankind. (Bhagavata, 1.2.23)

CONCLUSION

To conclude there are four forms of the Primordial nature..

1. Purushottam, the Supreme Person Lord Krishna.
2. The impersonally casual form of Brahma, realized by practitioners of the Path of Knowledge.
3. Akshara Brahman as realized by the Lords bhaktas.
4. The Inner Controller, which resides in the whole creation and within all individual souls.

This transcendental subject can be understood completely through the grace of the Lord and from the Vedanta scriptures. I have explained it as to my understanding. For further information, refer to the Vedanta Sutra, Sri Subodhini and Vidvan mandana, etc.

CHAPTER FOUR

NOURISHMENT IS HIS GRACE

After explaining the primordial nature of God, now we will explain the nature of grace. Pusti and the Path of Grace, Pustimarga .1

Pusti is an attribute of the Lord and is described in the Bhagavata, "Divine nourishment of the soul is His grace."

In Vallabhacharyas Nibandha Bhag,avatarathaprakarana it is said, "Pusti is Krishnas grace and nullifies the influence of time, action and nature."

GRACE PROVIDES ALL FRUITS

The nature of grace is peculiar; it can provide any fruit, , mundane or transcendental. When a persons wish is granted without performing any corresponding efforts, grace can be inferred to be the cause.

GRACE, A SECRET AND PROVEN FACT

Vallabhacharya says in his Nibandha, "Grace is a divine secret, yet revealed as a proven fact in the world." A divine secret because its camouflaged and a proven fact in the world means its manifested in the world as the supreme reward.

GRACE REMOVES OBSTACLES

A description of the effect of grace is revealed in the 6th

1 The Path of Grace, "Pushti Marga" is one of the names of Vallabhacharyas path.

canto of the Bhagavata in the cases of Ajamila, Indra and. Ditis foetus. Ajamila, a perpetrator of denouncable deeds, received liberation simply by pronouncing his sons name, which happened to be the same as the Lords.

Indra deserved punishment for killing Vishvarupa, Dadhichi and Vrtra who had achieved perfection in the paths of karma, knowledge and devotion respectively was not even reprimanded.

Ditis foetus, who was stuck by Indras favourite weapon, .the thunder bolt, did not die, but rather, multiplied because of the Lords grace.

Therefore, in Nibandha Vallabhacharya says, "The great .grace which nullified all effects is found in the case of Jndra and Vrtra."

"Great grace" refers to that which removes powerful obstacles and provides the realization of Gods feet. That "which nullifies all effects" refers to the dissolution of the con sequences of time, karma, and nature. For example, Indras bad deeds should have produced sorrowful results but such was Dot the case because his actions were nullified.

In the case of Ditis foetus, the attack of Indras weapon should have killed the foetus, but did not because of the nullification of the nature of the weapon by the Lord.

The Bhagavata explains this phenomenon, "Through the grace of Lord Vishnu, the foetus of Diti did not die although it was cut into pieces by Indras weapon. Oh king 2 ,in the same way you did not die when you were struck by Ashvatthama s weapon in the womb of your mother."

Other similar cases prove the power of grace.

GRACE FACILITATES PURSUITS OF LIFE

This grace helps in all the four pursuits of life, duty, wealth, sensual satisfaction and liberation. Therefore, Vallabhacharya says in his Subhodhirn, "Sahastrarjuna, the Lords partial manifestation, became king through grace."

2 King Parikshit, heard the Bhagavata from the enlightened sage Sukadeva, and achieved liberation after its seven day reading. When he was in his mothers womb, Lord Krishna saved him from Ashvatthamas missile.

In the same context Vallabhacharya states in his Nibandha. that Devabuti became liberated through the Lords grace. Yoga and other practices were merely channels for the Lords grace. the main instrument. Similarly, in Ajamilas liberation, the: utterance of the Lords name was the channel of the Lords grace. Ordinary examples of the Lords grace Vallabhacharya explains in his Nibandha. "Recitation of the Lords names., His meditation, adoration etc. are introduced to prove the Lords capacity to liberate all types of souls through those. means as well."

SPECIAL GRACE

The special type of grace yields that devotion which has the Lord himself as the fruit. It is called Pusti bhakti (the Blessed Devotion). In this context it is narrated in Vallabhacharyas.. Siddhantamuktavali, "Only grace is the governing factor in the.. Blessed Path."

"Blessed Path" means the Blessed Path of Devotion. In, this context, Goswami Vittalnath states in his Bhakti Hetunirnaya, "I bow down to that devotion which can be acquired only through His grace as well as to devotees blessed with it."

Therefore, a special type of grace can be inferred because of its effect, i.e. the Blessed Devotion. So it is stated in Vallabhacharyas Pustipravahamaryadadbheda doctrine, "Examples found in the Path of Devotion enables us to ascertain the: existence of grace."

Again, this doctrine is revealed in the Bhagavata passage" "As the Ganges flows incessantly towards the ocean, similarly our minds should flow constantly towards the Lord."

In the Bhagavata passage we find a description of this uncommon transcendental Path of Devotion, "This perfect devotion is absolute."

This extraordinary type of devotion, caused by the Lords; special type of grace, is described in the ninth canto of the Bhagavata, Ishanukatha, which means the accounts of the Lords devotees listening to Gods glories and performing other devotional practices. In these stories two different types 01 devotion are found; that which is confined to canon and that. which relies on grace.

GOD, THE ONLY REWARD

Devotion produced by a special grace is called Blessed Devotion. It is defined as that state in which there is no desire for any reward other than the sincere wish to acquire the Lord .as the fruit of life.

The Bhagavata passage, "Lovely Krishna alone is the reward of all those who possess eyes and other sense organs," Reveal how the Lords form is considered the fruit. Followers of :the Blessed Path do not desire anything else.

In this context, the Lord says in the Bhagavata, "Neither .achievements of yogic powers nor liberation are desired by those who have dedicated themselves to Me. They yearn for Me alone."

The Blessed devotees of Braja also clarify this same point in the passage, "Seeing your lovely face adorned with earrings ;and curly locks, we have become your slaves."

Also, in Bhakti Hansa, Shri Vittalnatha says, "In devotion, there can be desire for no reward other than the Lord Himself."

FOUR TYPES OF DEVOTION

This Blessed Devotion is of four types :
1. Devotion caused by a complex condition of grace and a current of activities.
2. Devotion caused by a complex condition of grace and "canon.
3. Devotion caused by a complex condition of grace and :Blessed Devotion.
4. Devotion caused by a simple condition of His supreme grace.

Vallabhacharya says in his Pustipravahamaryadadbheda, ""The nature of some souls is shaped by the combination of .grace and devotion. They become all knowing. Some other souls natures are shaped by a mixture of grace and a current ()f actions. They become involved in activity. Other souls natures are shaped by the combination of grace and canon. they become knower of Gods attributes. The last type of blessed souls have the purest love. They are the rarest of all .and are called pure blessed souls.

GRACE AND DEVOTION

The combination of grace and blessed devotion means that those blessed devotees upon receiving the Lords grace acquire all types of knowledge useful in the Lords worship. In this sense they are called allknowing.

The word "all" means the Lord, His divine sport, His. retinue, the world, etc. They worship with the knowledge or I the real nature of all these things. They are blessed devotees.

GRACE AND ACTIVITIES

A combination of grace and activities refers to those souls. who are dominated by ego and possessiveness in samsara and are only interested in activity. But, because they are blessed devotees, their activities are related to the Lord. Therefore, they are called the blessed souls flowing in the current of activity.

GRACE AND. CANON

A combination of grace and canon means that the soul... freeing itself from selfindulgence, is driven by canon towards. the duties of the Path of Detachment. Those blessed souls who. are inspired by canon and grace are detached from sensual attractions, and are attached to accounts of the Lords divine; activities. They are blessed devotees confined to canon.

PURE LOVE

Pure love refers to those souls who are predominantly love obsessed. They worship and praise the Lords attributes, inspired: by spontaneous love. These types of souls are extremely rare and par excellent. Shri Vittalanatha in his bhakti Hans defines. the devotion of only such blessed souls and not the common characteristics of all types of blessed devotion when he says, "Hearing etc., are superb when they are executed through love; and addiction. This is the blessed devotion."

In this statement it is proven that Love is a prior condition

for this type of. excellence and that souls should endeavour for the pure pusti devotion through worshipping the Lord with useful knowledge.

PURE BLESSED DEVOTION

The Pure Blessed Devotion can only be acquired when the Lord provides it. Moreover, as Vallabhacharya states in his Nibandha, "That devotion is pure, independent, and rare."

SPECIAL GRACE

One should not assume that grace is the same in all cases and consequently that there are no differences in the devotion it produces, for the Bhagavata states, "Brahma, Shiva not even Lakshmi, who is always near to the Lords feet, did not receive the grace that the Gopis received from Krishna."

The grace the maidens of Braja received from the Lord during the celebrated rasa festival when He danced with His arm around the neck of every Gopi, was not showered upon Lakshmi, although she remains always close to the Lords feet. So what can be said of other women "

GOD DEPENDENT UPON THE SOUL

A special type of. grace yields small the Blessed Devotion through which the Lord becomes dependent upon the soul. The Bhagavata passage reveals this when the I.ord says, "Because of devotion, I come under their control."

Vallabhacharya also says in this vein in his Nibandha, "when the soul relies upon Krishna, it is a rule of canon but when the Lord relies upon the soul it is an exception of grace."

By grace, Vallabhacharya means the Blessed Devotion. He explains this conception again in his Nibandha, "Grace is present when devotees are independent and the Lord acts according to their wishes, as when the Lord of liberation lets himself be bound by his mother. 3

3 Once when Krishna was caught by his mother Yashoda feeding butter and curds to the monkey she tried to tie up her mischievous

(Contd.)

TWO MEANINGS OF GRACE

In some other passages, the word grace does not mean blessed devotion, but rather, it refers to grace itself because of the context. For example, in Vallabhacbaryas Nibandha it is said, "Grace is for the soul and devotion is for the Supreme Lord achieved through His grace."

In Vallabhacharyas Subodhini, Nibandha and other writings, grace sometimes means the grace of the Lord and some times it means the devotion due to grace. The intelligent leader understands the Blessed Path in this light.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF PURE BLESSED SOULS

Question: Blessed Devotion is defined as the state in which no desire for reward other than the Lord Himself exists. This definition is too narrow and applied only to the pure blessed devotee for the Blessed Devotion mixed with a current of activity lacks such qualities.

Answer: This is not true. Blessed devotees of the other types, though they are not pure blessed souls, do not even wish for liberation. They only desire the Lord.

The Bhagavata says in this context, "Those who are attached to Lord Narayana never fear anything in the world. They remain indifferent to heaven, hell and even liberation."

This statement has no reference to the Pure Blessed Devotion, because Vallabhacharya in his Nibandha says, "It is difficult to find one such pure blessed soul in a billion."

From this explanation, it is clear that the abovementioned devotees devotion is mixed with knowledge. Also, Vrtra. who did not have the Pure Blessed Devotion says in the Bhagavata, "Oh Lord, besides you, I desire neither yogic powers nor liberation," which further proves the above given definition of the Blessed Devotion. "

. son. ach time she attempted to bind the lad, the rope fen short an; inch and when she ultimately became totally flustered her divine son showered his grace upon her and allowed Himself to be bound. It was an act of supreme mercy the Supreme would allow Himself to be bond by anyone.

HARIRAYAS TREATY ON GRACE

Shri Hariray 3, in his treatise on the characteristics of the Blessed Path, does not define the characteristics common to an types of grace, but rather recounts only the special features of the Pure Blessed Devotion.

For example, the absence of all means is not applicable to the Blessed Devotion within the current of activities. The characteristics he describes do not constitute a general definition of grace but rather refer only to the Pure Blessed Devotion. Shri Hariraya begins explaining the characteristics of the Pure Blessed Devotion absence.

THE FRUIT IS THE MEANS ,

"Where the absence of all means is the means to achieve the fruit and where the fruit, (Lord Krishna) is the means, know that to be the Blessed Path."

In the chapter on the reward of the tamasa devotees in the ..tenth canto of the Bhagavata we see that the Lord was achieved ..by the maidens of Braja when they started to weep humbly after renouncing all means of finding Him, such as singing Krishnas praises. Here, Shri Hariraya does not want the absence of means to be taken as the means to achieve the Lord and there "fore says, "Where the fruit (Lord Krishna) is the means, know that to be the Blessed Path."

The Lord is the reward of all efforts and to receive that reward, the effort lies in the Lord Himself. Therefore, Val!abhacharya says, "Then, the Lord, after becoming Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainers, and Rudra ,the destroyer, again became Krishna .4"

4 First Krishna became Brahma, the Creator, which signified the Gopis "mana" or anger in love for Krishna. Then, when He became Vishnu, the Gopis began searching for the Lord. When they were finally humbled and realized that the Lord could not be achieved through any means, they began to cry. This occurred when the Lord .was Rudra. After becoming Brahma. Vishnu, and Rudra. Krishna then became Himself and appeared before those blessed women.

ALL ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH GRACE

"Where worldly and scriptural achievements are accomplished through the Lords grace alone, and never through the devotees effort, (which causes obstacles to arise), know that to be the Blessed Path."

Exactly how the devotees of Braja attained the eternal realm without any effort is described by the Creator in the Bhagavata. , Although the people of Braja passed their night in deep sleep ,and days in toiling work, He will take them to the eternr abode."

We observe the truth that if one makes any effort without relying on the Lord, he is confronted with obstacles 5 as found in the account of Nandas pilgrimage to the Amnika forest. 6

THE MODE OF ACCEPTANCE

"Where the Lord accepts the soul, does not consider its; qualification, etc, nor does He delay, know that to be the Blessed Path."

Although scripture confines the eligibility of liberation to mankind, the Bhagavata proves Harirayas passage in the following line, "The maidens of Braja, cows, birds as well as the: deer reached the Lord only through divine attachment."

ATTACHMENT TO GOD HIMSELF

"Where a devotee who has understood the intention of scriptural injunction, remains attached to the. Lord Himself, having no obsession for scriptural duty, know that to be the Blessed Path."

If the soul cannot rise above the obsession of adhering to scriptural obligation when it is ripe to realize God then those." obligations become obstacles and should be renounced for

5 Obstacles arise because the practitioner believes that "I have done it." and is not aware of the Lords interaction in everything.

6 Forsaking Krishna, Nanda Baba went to the Ambika forest to perform some rituals. Because of his wavering faith, there he was seized by the water god Kubera, only to be later saved by his son.

attachment to Lord Krishna. Know that to be the Pure Blessed Path of Devotion. When the Lord commanded the maidens of Braja to return home explaining, "By listening, hearing, seeing and meditating, you can sustain the devotional attachment for Me," they understood the import of the statement to mean to remain with the Lord and not return home following his command. 7

CONSTANT APPRECIATION

"Where there is not consideration of virtue or defect, where there is a constant feeling of appreciation in all the Lords deeds, know that to be the Blessed Path."

Blessed devotees do not look down upon the accounts of the Lord crying, stealing butter, etc., nor do they consider them faults and unacceptable. When the Lord revealed His greatness by subduing the evil snake Kali and saving the people of Braja from a forest fire, the blessed devotees did not award these deeds with any special importance but felt that all the Lords deeds have divine excellence. That is the Blessed Path.

ONLY KRISHNA S PLEASURE

"Where thought is never given to worldly and scriptural satisfaction but only to please the Lord, know that to be. the Blessed Path."

Where all efforts are directed to please the Lord and where there is no consideration of mundane or transcendental gains know that to be the Pure Blessed Path. of Devotion. Uddhava says in the Bhagvata in this context to the, maidens of Braja. "you have renounced your sons, husbands, bodies, relatives. and homes and have chosen Sri Krishna, the Supreme Person."

7 In ten slokas, the Lord tried 10 convince the Gopis to leave His presence in the Vrindavan forest and return to their homes and serve their husbands, His words, clever]y spoken, held within their Context the opposite meaning as well, that They should stay in the forest with him.

UNCONDITIONAL GRACE

"Where there is not an infinitesimal reason for the Lords selection of the soul but where the choice depends solely upon His divine sweet will, know that to be the Blessed Path."

Where the Lord never considers the efforts made by the souls as the reason for accepting it as his own, that is the Pure Blessed Path. For example, although the tribal Pulinda women were totally unfit, Krishna gave them a reward which he never bestowed upon even those who are affluent with spiritual means. This concept is revealed in the Katha Upanisad, "He is attained "by His chosen people only."

INDEPENDENT DEVOTION

"Where devotion is independent and does not require the .external manifestation of the Lord and becomes all types of .divine experiences, know that to be the Blessed Path."

The Blessed Path is where, in the mood of separation from the Lord, devotional praising, etc., of Him is enough to provide the fruit of supreme bliss. Also, here listening, singing etc., .are performed with the utmost love for the Lord and provide the experience of all kinds of divine pleasure, that is the Pure Blessed Path.

FEARLESSNESS

"Where there is no fear of the world and scriptures because .of profuse divine attachment and where everything other than the Lord appears as an obstacle, know that to be the Blessed Path."

Where there is abundant divine attachment for Krishna, there is no fear of ones husband, sons etc., as well as of the worlds .above: That is the Blessed Path. Also, in such divine attachment to the Lord, time, karma, and nature etc., appear as obstacles : That is also the pure Blessed Path of Devotion.

8 My teacher Goswamy Shyam Manohar does not totally agree with this statement. He feels it gives too much importance to the internal realization of separation and neglects the Lords outward manifestation.

For example, in the Bhagavata, the Lord warned the maiden of Braja, "Your illicit love for Me will bring you infamy and will keep you from all heavenly rewards," yet He could not induce any scriptural fear. When Krishna tried to frighten them saying, "Your mothers, fathers, sons are searching for you," He could not induce any worldly fear in their hearts. –

RELATIONSHIP

"Where relationship is both the means and achievement and "is established according to Krishnas sweet desire, know that to be the Blessed Path."

Where the body and sentimental relationships with the Lord" are the means to achieve the fruit and where the union of all the senses with the Lord is the achievement, that is the Pure Blessed Path: Vallabhacharya says in this context in his" Subodhini, "To have chitchat, sight, and association etc. with, the Lord is the fruit of life."

The relationship is established due to Lord Krishnas desire for His devotees. The Bhagavata explains, "They know nothing. besides Me nor do I know anything besides them."

RELATED, UNRELATED AND OPPOSITE

"Where anything related to the Lord is treated as if it is the.. Lord Himself and anything unrelated is treated with indifference: while anything in opposition to the Lord is opposed. know that to be the Blessed Path."

When Uddhava came to Braja, there was sublime enthusiasm which is narrated in the Bhagavata passage, "Uddhava. who is the servant of the Lords lotus feet was surrounded by all the: eager maidens of Braja." 9

NO POSSESSIVENESS

"Where no concern is shown for ones body etc. and a keen desire for Him always lingers. Path."

9 Because Uddhava was the Lords friend, he was treated by the Gopis as if he were the Lord Himelf.

Where there is no possessiveness in the sustenance of the body etc., but an attitude that all things belong to the Lord, that is the Blessed Path. The body is sustained in the Lords separation because it is seen as having some utility for the Lord. So it is said in the Bhagavata, "We maintain our breath, while searching for You."

Upon that passage Vallabhacharya comments, "For you, Krishna, we maintain our breath."

NO EXPECTATIONS

"Where in devotion no reciprocation from God is expected and where the divine sentiment is nourished, know that to be the Blessed Path."

Where the worshipper does not think of any reward for his services to the Lord and where the nourishment of the devotees divine attachment is accomplished by the Lord Himself, it is the pure Blessed Path. When Krishna uplifted the Govardhana Hill, He transferred the devotees of Braja worship from other gods towards Himself in order to increase the divine devotional .attachment. 10

NO EXCEPTION

"Where the Lord in no case provides the devotee with the fruit of worship, because the flowering of his divine attachment requires that the fruit be withheld, know that to be the Blessed Path."

The Lord separated the Gopies from Him so they could experience the divine pang of separation. If in that separation; the Lord appears even in their hearts, because of praising Him fu song or if He produced knowledge in them similar to that of,

10 Krishna convinced the people of Braja to adorn the Govardhan hill, his own form, instead of their traditional worship of Indra, the rain god. Indra, angry with the sudden change in worship, showered destructive rains upon the Braja land in revenge. Krishna then I saved the residents of Braja by lifting the Govardhan hill and used it as an umbrella, to protect them from the torrents. In this way, .lndra was humbled and came to know Krishnas divinity and the people of Braja became one pointed in their worship.

the seers, the maidens of Braja would never, be able to feel the full pangs of separation. Their divine love would remain unfulfilled, therefore the Lord never did so, but increased their pangs of separation. It is said in the Bhagavata, "Uddhava saw the maidens of Braja obsessed with Krishna, immersed in utter grief."

Uddhava, having received the Gopis love lessons, returned ;to Krishna saying, "I have come herein anguish of separation." ,

SEPARATION, SUPREME BLISS

"Where one is happier in the Lords separation than in His union because of the experience of all the divine sports in that state, know that to be the Blessed Path."

Where in separation, more bliss is experienced than in union, because from moment to moment, the internal experience of the Lords divine sport is felt, that is the Blessed Path.

When one reflects on a particular divine sport, and then ,experiences it, if the person desires to see any divine sport of the Lord, he can do so easily in separation. Therefore, Vallabhacharya says in his Subodhini, "Internal experience 0f" the Lord and His divine sport is the supreme reward." ..

THE REWARD AND THE MEANS

"Where there is a reversal of the other regarding the means and ends and where devotional attachment is the ends as well as the means, know that to be the Blessed Path."

The Blessed Path of Devotion is where the divine attachment which is unconditioned love is the ends to be attained. The divine attachment is the means to achieve the bliss of the Lord Himself. It is worthy of being requested during the initial stage and is also a reward. The divine sentiment can only be achieved when it is given by the Lord. The Lord is the means for the attainment of the divine reward. Therefore, there is a reversal of the order means and the ends.

HUMILITY

"Where there is a constant feeling of remorse about all his activities, (because of the devotees excessive eagerness to

experience the Lords other sports), which continuously produces humility, know that to be the Blessed Path."

The Braja devotees experienced the bliss of the Lords. return to Braja and His different joyful reciprocations, yet, in spite of their delight, they were sad not to have experienced the Lords divine sports in the forest. This arose in them a feeling. of humility and they did not become jealous. This is a particular type of experience which is related in the Bhagavata passage". "The Maidens of Braja Imbibed the honey of Krishnas lotus face through their beelike eyes."

HUMILITY, UNCONDITIONED MEANS

"Where humility is the singular means for the Lords manifestation and the humility aroused in separation is the fruit. know that to be the Blessed Path."

The humility which arises due to the difficulty and over eagerness for His union is a minor reward worthy of request. Separation makes one humble while union makes one prideful. That humility which results in the Lords manifestation is worthy of being requested and is the fruit. In the context. Sri Gokulnath says. "Oh Lord of Radha. bless me with humility; so that I may attain You."

RENUNCIATION

"Where there is renunciation of all sensual objects and the; dedication of the body etc with all the divine sentiments for the Lord. know that to be the Blessed Path."

In this context the maidens of Braja said, "We have attained. Your feet, giving up all sensual objects:.

REMEMBERED BY HIM

"Where the soul, due to total attachment for the Lord feels that it is always remembered by Him, which in turn enables it to forget about sensual pleasures, this is the Blessed Path." .

Those who are totally dedicated to the Lord consider everything His and hence they need not renounce sensual objects but become detached and freed from possessiveness: That is the:

Blessed Path. In conjunction, the Bhagavata states, "Oh Lord., You have created these three worlds as Your own divine sport. Those who presume the role of being a master in the world are; of wretched intellect."

Each and everything in the creation, being a part of the Lords divine sport is perfect, only samsara is denouncable. Where the Lord remembers the soul. it is the Pure Blessed Path of Devotion.

This is explained in the Bhagavata passage, "Oh destroyer of inauspiciousness, have mercy upon your humble devotee by sometimes remembering them as Your own. ,

Again, it is revealed in the Bhagavata in this context. "The Lord use to call the cows who strayed afar affectionately, uttering their names."

CONCLUSION

To conclude, Hariraya says, "Keeping Vallabhacharya in our hearts, one should always understand and rely specifically on the Blessed Path in its abovementioned way."

Because the Pure Blessed Path is highly revered, other authors have generally narrated the Pure Blessed Path of Devotion, though not the common characteristics of all types of blessed devotion which have been related in this chapter according to the writings of Vallabhacharya viz., Nibandha etc.. which the intelligent reader should refer to.

CHAPTER FIVE

ON THE NATURE OF THE ELIGIBILITY OF THE BLESSED DEVOTION

CONFERRED BY GODS GRACE

Now we proceed to inquire into the nature of the eligibility of the Blessed Path of Devotion. In the Blessed Path the eligibility is conferred by the Lords grace. So it is said in the Upanishad, "Not through intellect, nor through extensive hearing can the Supreme Self be attained. It can be achieved only by His chosen people." (Mundaka, 3.2.3)

INCLINATION

Although the Lords grace cannot readily be perceived, its effect, i.e. inclination towards the Blessed Path, can be inferred. No one can even be inclined towards the Blessed Path unless the Lord blesses that soul. Vallabhacharya clarifies this in his Nibandha when he says, "Now I shall describe the means through which blessed ones can attain their goal", and explains his own statement, "Inclination towards the Blessed Path certifies the experience of Gods grace." (Sarvanirnaya 226)

That person is eligible who is inclined towards the Blessed Path. This is due to the Lords grace caused by His desire to provide the divine reward.

ORIGINATION OF THE INCLINATION

Now the origination of divine inclination will be explained.

From the divine types of souls. the Lord selects souls for the Blessed Path. Through His grace. those souls have association with the Lords bhaktas. By their association, or by assisting them in Krishnas worship, through His grace, the devotional experience in the form of hearing and employing the body in the Lords service is achieved. Ultimately, there is a divine inclination towards the Blessed Path. In this respect the Bhagavata states, "By always serving holy souls, my mind was purified and I became sincerely inclined towards the divine practice." (1.5.25)

Those who have such inclination are eligible for the Blessed Path.

After a divine inclination for the Blessed Path occurs. {through listening to the Lords stories and other devotional practices), the mind becomes possessed with the Lord and is Purified. Then the soul desires to hear about the Lord more .and more and to perform other devotional practices. In this context the Bhagavata says. "He enters through the ears and sits upon the lovesaturated lotus heart and removes the souls impurities like the autumn floods purge impure waters. Whose heart is pure, never relinquishes Shri Krishnas feet." (2.8.56)

A VAGUE INCLINATION

By repeatedly hearing about the Lord, divine inclination is aroused. Narada says, in this vein. in the Bhagavata. "My inclination towards the famous Lord Krishna came about by .listening to every word about His sport." (1.5.26)

Here, the Lord is not directly perceived. Thus, such an inclination is called a vague inclination.. This vague inclination is considered the initial stage of devotion. It occurs by listening to the Lords accounts and by other devotional practices, as well as by respecting and having the sight of saintly people. In this context the Bhagavata states, "who would not love to the divine accounts of the Lord whose swordlike meditation cuts the knot of karma." (1.2.15)

Vallabhacharya comments on that line. explaining. "In all transcendental matters. inclination is produced from hearing Their greatness..

This devotion, Vallabhacharya again describes in his. Subodhini, "Inclination, listening, etc., as well as love are the. three types of devotion."

SENTIMENT AL SEED

With this vague inclination to the Lord, if one goes on. performing devotional listening etc., a seedlike subtle devotion al sentiment, described in Sri Vallabhacbaryas Bbaktivarddhini, starts growing. the Lord implants this seed of divine mood immediately after the manifestation of the souls form to. affiliate certain souls with the Blessed Path.

DISTINCT INCLINATION AND LOVE

Listening coupled with a vague inclination to the Lord produces internal feelings about Him. In this light, Vallabhacharya says in his Nibandha, "The Lord is automatically manifested through devotional .listening etc." (Bhagavatartha, 2.16)

When there is a special inclination, due to some sort of inner experience about the Lord, it is called a distinct inclination. When the seed of divine mood, assisted with the distinct and conscious inclination grows through the means of devotion all listening etc., it sprouts into the form of love. This love removes the attachments of the soul to everything but the Lord. Vallabacharya explains this in his Bhaktivarddhini, "Divine. love removes mundane attachment," which means a devotional! sentiment that removes attachment for everything except the. ., Lord. This .is a karyalakshana.2

1 Bhaktivarddhini is one of Shri Va1labhacharyas 16 works. In this treatise, he explains the ways to increase devotion by strengthening the subtle seed of devotion through renunciation, listening, and singing the Lords glories. He then goes on to explain the three stages of devotional achievement, love, attachment and addiction to God.

2 "Karya laksbana" is defined as something through its symptoms. The other three types of definitions are... "Karana Lakshana" is to define something through its cause : "Svarupa lakshana" is to define something through its actual form and nature.

(Contd.).

ATTACHMENT

By continuously repeating the practice of the Lords worship ;and listening to His divine accounts, the sentimental seed grows .from the stage of love to the stage of attachment to the Lord. This attachment to the Lord produces a feeling of detachment for all things which are not related to Him. Vallabacharya ,defines this devotional state in his Bhaktivardhini, "Because ,of attachment of the Lord; a feeling of noninclination develops towards ones home." (4)

This noninclination is not an absence of all inclination but .a feeling opposite to worldly inclination, for among the six , meaning of negation contrariety is enumerated. 8

And so, in Bhaktivarddhini Vallabhacharya explains, "Due 10 attachment to the Lord, relating and the things of ones ,home appear as obstacles and unrelated," (6)

ADDICTION

With the steady growth of attachment to the Lord ensues .

Prayojana lakshana:" is to define something in terms of its actual purpose.

3 The six forms of negations are

1 No resemblance : If a horse does not resemble a normal horse it can be said, "It is not a horse."

2 Deficiency: When a woman has a thin waist: she is call in Sanskrit literature, ., A woman with no waist".

3 Absence: Where there are no trees it is called treeless.

4 Difference: A pot is not a cloth. etc.

5 Un praiseworthy : A Brahmin that does not have Brahminical qualities can not be called a Brahmin.

6 Contrariety: Like the example given in the text Contrary feeling to worldly inclinations.

The states of negation in these six examples do not imply total! negation. They a);e certain conditions in each case. In this way, Shri Vallabhacharya does not deny the world, but a contrary feeling to worldly inclinations. Or the six types of negation. Shri Vallabhacharya accepts, resemblance, difference and contrariety. He does not accept absence because the Lord is in every form and therefore can not be absence. Deficiency because the Lord is everything and therefore nothing can be deficient and un praiseworthy Because the Lords divine sport can never be un praiseworthy. He is the perfect abode of contradictory attributes.

the stage of vyasana, addiction to God, which means a state: in which the natural regulations of the body are discarded.

When devotion reaches the stage of addiction, it is caned the "Mental Worship". The Shandilya Bhakti Sutra defines. that devotion as, "Intense attachment to God." (1.1.)

Vallabhacharya says in his Bhakti Vardhini, "The accomplishment of devotion is only in addiction to Lord Krishna." (5)

Vallabhacharya clarifies this in the following passage from his Siddhantamuktavali. "Worship is the minds adherence to Him. It is developed through the utilization of ones body and , ",." wealth for the Lords sake." (2) .

Commenting upon the above text, Sn Vittalnatha has quoted a passage from the eleventh canto of the: Bhagavata as an example of this kind of mental state. "The maidens of Braja . became unaware of their bodies, relations, this world and the next because of their complete mental attachment to SriKrishna." (1 1.12.12)

In the third canto of the Bhagavata this devotion is defined in the following way, "When the mind incessantly flows towards the Lord, as the Ganges river rushes to the ocean, it is called. the Transcendental Devotion, i.e. Bbakti Yoga. (3.29.1112)

Sri Vallabhacharya explains that passage in his Subodhini,. "The mental flow should be incessantly towards the Lord as the: physical movements of the maidens of Braja were uninterruptedly directed towards the Blessed Lord."

Therefore, all spiritual efforts are made until the stage of addiction is achieved.

THE REWARD OF DEVOTION

In Vallabhacharyas Sri Subodhini, and Nibandha, it is. " stated that the three subchapters in the tenth canto of the Bhagavata that relate to the means of knowledge, (pramana).. the object of knowledge, (prameya) and the means of attainment, (sadhana) refer to the three stages of devotional, love,. attachment and addiction. 4 Following, are the chapters on the:

4 In the seven pramna chapter in the 10 canto, the Lord takes on

divine reward. (The reward of devotion is attained upon acquisition of addiction)

LOVES NONTECHNICAL MEANING

Sometimes love is described in the Bhagavata etc., or in the writing of Vallabhacharya and Vitthalanath as the end of all spiritual efforts. There, love should be taken as identical with addiction. For example, when Vallabhacharya says, "Through worship performed with love, the supreme manifestation, Krishna appears. "Through worship performed with love", means the mental worship motivated by addiction. (Sarvanirnaya 92)

Devotional love aroused due to listening, etc., and performed out of the inclination to the Lord is the first stage, i.e. love. The second level is attachment to God, while the final stage comes with addiction to the Lord. In a nontechnical sense, sometimes attachment as well as addiction are referred to by the term love. The meaning should always be determined by the context in which love is used. In all cases, the final reward occurs after the stage of addiction. Vallabhacharya says in this context. "The accomplishment of devotion is only in addiction to Lord Krishna." (Bhaktivarddhini S) Here the word only excludes all

different forms for the different devotees. In Braja He revealed this mother his childish nature; to his cow lads, his friendship, while to the Gopis; he showed them his form as a lover. In the next seven chapters which are called Prameya, It is revealed how these devotees established and made distinct relationship with Krishna. The following seven chapters are called Sadbana lila. The theme here is how the different bhaktas, according to their different devotional sentiments, win the Lord according to their own personal wishes. The next seven chapters deal with the rewards, the phala prakarna, where in the Lord is ultimately won over by His bhaktas. He becomes the ideal lover, friend, son or whatever, his bhaktas desire. Love for the Lord is the stage of pramana. There, His nature is in the process of being revealed. In the Prameya, the particular relationship is established. Attachments ensue in the Sadhana prakarana where the soul becomes addicted to the Lord and tries to win Him. After the addiction blossoms for the Lord, the mentl!l worship, the fruit of devotion is achieved. These 28 chapters in the 10th canto of the Bhagavata depict the Braja liIa of Lord Krishna and are arranged to demonstrate the unfolding of the fruit of devotion.

possibilities of taking the state of love or attachment as the final climax.

TOTAL LOVE

This devotional addiction is described by the Lord to Devahuti in the third canto of the Bhagavata as intense Bhakti Yoga: "Devotees who have a motiveless direct 5 devotion for the Supreme Person do not leave My worship to accept, even when given the four types of liberation, viz. to stay in the Lords abode, to have the Lords powers, to remain in the Lords;: proximity, and to possess the same form as the Lord. This alone is called the intense Bhakti Yoga." .

Vallabhacharya explains this same concept, "This happens only after the appearance of intense love for God." (Subodhini,:" 3.29.1314)

This addiction is the final culmination of love, With the occurrence of addiction, one feels the presence of the Supreme ." Person and the intense feeling of love everywhere. This stage is called Total Love. Once Total Love transpires, the Supreme Person is experienced within and without. Then, finally comes the reward which is described by Vallabhacharya in his Seva Phalam treatise as the Transcendental Power. 6

TRANSCENDENTAL POWER

Up to now we have dealt with the eligibility of pure blessed devotees. The reward comes when the soul enters into the eternal divine sports of the Lord which is described by Vallabhacharya as the Transcendental Power. In the commentary of the

5 If you love God and therefore love His deity. this is direct devotion. but if you Jove his deity and therefore love God. this is indirect devotion and does not example the devotion of !!race. It is inferior because. the deity acts as an intermediary force between the soul and God. According to Shri Vallabhacharya, the deity is Mt worshipped with this type of duality but as God in the form of the deity

Transcendental power is one of the Three divine rewards that come from service to Krishna. It is accepted by most interpreters of Vallabhacharya as being the highest reward.. the, intimate" association with the all blissful Lord.

Anandamayadhikarana topic of the Brahma Sutra, the fruit of the most blessed souls is described as the fulfilment of all their desires with the Lord. This reward is the same as entry into the eternal divine sport. .

In Pustipravamaryada treatise, Sri Vallabhacharya says, "In the Blessed Path, the Lord Himself is the reward." (15)

Here, Vallabhacharyas intended meaning is entry into the ..eternal divine sports of the Lord. 7

ENTRANCE INTO THE ETERNAL SPORT

This entry can be of various types. Some join the eternal sport as a devotee, while others may enter as cows, other animals, birds, trees, etc , or even in the form of a river, etc. They acquire transcendental bodies, as described in the Ananda mayadhikarnana topics of the Brahma Sutra, and experience the Lords bliss throughout their bodies, sense organs, breath, minds, as well as their souls. The Lord describes these divine characteristics of his lila retinue in the following passage from the Bhagavata. "Look at those trees, adorned by the immortal gods. (10.15.5)

On the occasion of the reward, according to the Lords sweet will , souls of the Blessed Path may acquire any form among the Lords divine companions.

FOUR KINDS OF BLESSED DEVOTION

The Blessed Devotion is of four kinds due to the four different conditions under which they are produced.

Although all four types are the same in that they possess

7 This entry into the Lords eternal divine sport does not necessarily have to occur after the death of the material body, but can be experience while living by the .jivan muktas", .the living liberated souls".

8 It is mentioned that the trees in Vrindavan are realized sages that have incarnated there to witness the sporting of the Lord. Trees also demonstrate the highest charity. Their lives are given in service to others. In the summer they provide shade. When struck by a stone, they shower fruits, and when they die, their bodies can be used as fuel.

Blessed Devotion, they differ in form. Similarly, their rewards, are common with the respect to their entry into the eternal divine sport, but the forms in which they enter the eternal divine sport vary. They may be devotees, cows, other animals, and trees, etc.

Thus, all four types of Blessed souls have the one common reward, i.e., Transcendental Power or the entry into Lords eternal divine sport. In this context the Brahma Sutra says, "Then after achieving the befitting liberation, then liberation provided through the Path of Law is looked down upon as being the same as karmic bondage. 9 (4.2.7)

Sri Vallabhacharya explains here, "then means the entry into the Blessed Paths divine sport." (4.2.7)

The eternal divine sports which the Lord revealed in Braja are related only to the Blessed Path. There, even the common reward of entry (as a tree or bird, etc.) into such sports in any particular form is desired. Uddavas aspiration in the Bhagavata reveals this point. "O when will I become a shrub, creeper, herb or even a plant in the Vrindavan forest so I may aspire to" the dust of the Gopis feet." (10.47.61) .

Those who tako the form of a devotee, cow lad, or any other form in the divine realm of Brihadavana or Vrindavan relish the" divine mood.

PRESENT DAY BLESSED SOULS

Presentday blessed souls, through the Lords grace, when. the seed of divine mood sprouts, will also ultimately enter the Lords lila. Those presentday blessed souls who are not highly eligible, will develop devotional addiction after many births and will then also enter the eternal divine sport. Vallabhacharya comments on the Bhagavata passage,. "The divinely oriented senses, possessing scriptural virtues,. motivate the minds aptitude towards sattva which creates a. spontaneous motiveless devotion to the Lord," (3.25.32}1

9 For those who have entered into the divine sport, the highest form or liberation. the liberation into the attribute less Akshara Brahman does not seem relish able. because there the soul cannot have a personal relationship with the Lord. They are merged. like water into milk...

explaining, "Other people, throughout several births develop a "partial aptitude for the Lord which remains imperishable until it grows fully in the last birth into full devotion."

DEVOTION WITHIN THE PATH OF LAW

In the Sarvanirnaya Nibandha, when Sri Vallabhacharya: says, "Now I will describe the reward of the highly eligible I souls who belong to the Path of Devotion. " 10 (218)

" Here, the Path of Devotion should be understood as the Path within the limitations of Law. ,

It is explained in the same text, "Now. in this Kali age, people follow paths contrary to canon, but, if one has exclusive , faith that Krishna is their only Lord.. forgetting everything else,he or she will merge into Him." (212.218)

In the above passage, the lower and higher types of rewards for devotees who follow the Path of Law is explained as mergence into the Lord. 11

In this context Vallabhacharya states in his Bhagavatarath, Nibandha, "The Ganges river takes us to the zenith of that devotion governed by Law," (9.65) and then further explains in the same treatise, "Worshippers who make spiritual efforts on the banks of the Ganges attain the liberation of merging into the Lord." (9.60)

10 A bit or confusion seem to have entered the text. Purushottamji, a great commentator on the works or Vallabhacharya and a lineage holder, interprets the same text as "Now I will describe the reward of the less eligible soul who belong to the Path of Devotion controlled by cannons." In this light, the text makes more sense.

11 My teacher, Goswamy Shyam Manohar differs with Lalu Bhattji in this section. Lalu Bhatt explains that the higher and lower rewards for devotees who follow the Path of Cannons is mergence. while actually. mergence can also be for the Pushti souls He has not made this distinction. What differentiates the bhakta who follows the Path of Cannons from the one who is following the Path of Grace is the Transcendental Power the divine soul achieves on earth. or in any other abode. In devotion controlled by cannons, love of God is mixed with knowledge of His greatness. That knowledge is a prerequisite for the divine love while in the Blessed Devotion 01 Grace, love acts out of its own inspiration and does not rely on knowledge.

From this it is clear that the Ganges river represents devotion governed by law. Here mergence means to be one with the Lord, or entry into the Lord. This is supported in the Gita, " After realizing me, they enter Me." (18.25)

ABSORPTION

In the following passages Sri Vallabhacharya explains the way of absorption into the Lord in the Blessed Devotion of Grace.

"When one cannot find a properly qualified guru, Hari should be worshipped by choosing the Lords deity." (Sarvanirnaya 228)

"Those duties (of serving God) are meant for householders.. , Explaining his own statement, Vallabhacharya continues, "If one practices all I have described 2 he or she, with their family members, will be absorbed with the Lord." (Sarvanirnay 246)

Here, absorption means the Transcendental Power of having the experience of the divine sport. Therefore, Sri Vallabha.charya explains in his Nibandha, "The primal Person, Sri Krishna, alone should be worshipped for absorption with Him," and then continues, "If one has the ambition of Supreme Truth which is described in the Taittiriyopanisada as the knower of Brahma attains the Supreme, then he should worship Krishna alone."

The two different types of rewards have been clarified as follows,

1. Those souls who belong to the Path of Devotion con trolled by law have the reward of mergence into the Lord.

2. Those souls who belong to the Path of Blessed Devotion receive the reward of absorption with Krishna. They have the Transcendental Power to have the experience of His divine sport. 13

12 In this text, Shri Vallabhacharya has revealed soul should live and worship the Lord.

13 For those who follow the path of Cannons and merge with the Lord, they are not able to experience His divine sport because they lose their individuality.

For further inquiry about this subject the Anandadmaya dhikarana chapter of the Brahma Sutra should be consulted.

THREE REWARDS

In the Sevaphala Vivarana, Sri Vallabhacharya speaks about three rewards of worship, "the Transcendental Power, mergence and a body useful for worship in a place like Vaikuntha, etc."

Transcendental Power belongs to the souls within the Blessed Path of Devotion while the other two rewards, mergence and a body useful for worship, are for devotees who belong to the Path of Devotion which is controlled by law. Vallabhacharya agrees with this in his Seva Phalam treatise and comments on the latter two rewards, mergence, and a body useful in worship in his Nibandha. "If a devotees attachment to the body is strong, then he becomes Krishnas servant. Otherwise, devotion on the banks of the Ganges definitely provides the liberation of merging into the Lord. 14 (Bhagavararth, 9.70)

Know that devotion which is listed in the five cords of knowledge 15 is within the limitations of law. Its fruit is described by Sri Vallabhacharya, "That devotion through which the wise soul merges into Hari." (Shastrartha 46)

LOVES DIFFERENT MEANINGS

Sometimes, devotion within the limitation of canon is spoken of as love, but that love is restricted by some condition. For instance, the Lord is loved in that Path because He is believed to be the bestower of liberation. For this and other reasons, it is not the absolute love found in the Blessed Path of Devotion. Still, the Brahman Sutra says, "Knowledge is fruitful in both of

14 When there is a lack of knowledge, attachment to the body is mixed with devotion to Krishna and creates a feeling of being the Lords dasa or servant. This attitude makes the body useful in worship. A soul who has knowledge of God, but not the highest devotion, will not confuse the body for the soul and realizing them to be one with the supreme, merges into the Lord.

15 The five cords of knowledge are remembrance that the body, sense, life breath, and inner witness are all connected with the Lord, as well, as remembrance of ones divine form.

the paths of law and of Blessed Devotion. Otherwise, there would be a contradiction." 16

The Lord selects souls for the two paths. Those picked for the Path limited by Law become engaged in the practice of listening to the Lords divine account while their motive is to gain liberation. With respect to that path, Sri Vallabhacharya says, "The liberation of merging into or becomingidentical with Brahman is achieved only through the worship of Hari." He then explains, "Only through the worship of Hari can the soul ..merge and have unity with Brahman." (Shastrartha 36)

NO NEED OF LIBERATION

Souls belonging to the Blessed Path have no respect for such a mergence of any type of liberation. This is expressed in the Bhagavata passage, "Except for My service, even if they are given, they (the bhaktas) do not accept any types of liberation." (Bhagavata,3.29.13)

Commenting on the Bhagavata passage, "Having seen the elegance of your smiling face covered with curly locks," (10.29.39), Vallabhacharya says, "The four types of liberation are to have the same form as the Lord, to have residence in the same locas with the Lord, to be in proximity with the Lord and to merge into the Lord."

Going on to explain the significance of the Lords locks Vallabhacharya says, "But those who merge into the Supreme Blissful Lord, do not have any devotional delight. One can only "relish the devotional experience by being separate from the Lord."

Blessed souls have no craving for the liberation of mergence into the Lord. The experience of bliss in mergence is confined " to merely the soul and cannot be experienced through the senses, or can the soul have the Transcendental Power.

16 In some types or Pushti devotion, knowledge is necessary. Forth is reason, if we only ascribe knowledge to the Path or Cannons, a contradiction would arise for pushti devotion is mixed with knowledge.

17 The Lords locks represent mergence into the Lord.

Vallabhacharya again says in this context, "Those who enter the bliss of Brahman experience pleasure only through the Self." .(Shastrarth 50)

It is obvious to the intelligent reader why Blessed devotees .do not desire mergence with the Lord, but rather entrance into the Lords eternal divine sport.

THE BRAJA DEVOTION

The eligibility for such devotion depends upon the special :grace of the Lord. The Bhagavata says in this connection, "When the Lord showers His grace over those who contemplate upon Rim, they become unattached to the world and to the scriptures." (4.29.46)

This type of devotion is ex amplified and promoted by the .devotees of Braja. Uddhava praises their devotion in the Bhagavata, "You maidens of Braja have promoted the supreme devotion to the Lord. It is rare even among the great sages." (10.47. 25)

Sri Vallabhacharya explains in his Subodhini, "For the achievement of devotion, some well known means, e.g. charity, .etc., have been enumerated in the scriptures while the Blessed Devotion cannot be achieved through any means (and is there Sore not well known)." .

Blessed Devotees should know that their Blessed Devotion is penultimate.

CHAPTER SIX

THE NATURE OF TOTAL LOVE

Now we will discuss the nature of Total Love, sarvatama bhava which is the essential condition for achieving the Supreme Person.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Total love (sarvatama bhava) is an advanced stage of devotion comprised of unconditional love for God. The word bhava means love so it is said in the scriptures, "Love for God and other divine things is called bhava."

The love within the soul is called atmabhava, the love the soul cherishes for itself is absolute. So it is stated in the Brhadranyaka Upanishad, "Our sons are not loved for their own sake, but for the sake of our own Soul." (Brhadarayaka 2.4.51, 4.5,6.)

The Bhagavata states this same concept, "0 king, everyone loves his own soul." (10.14.50)

Therefore, as one has pure love for his soul, similarly, there should be love for God. This is the meaning of the scriptures.

The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad says in this connection, "He is your soul, the immortal inner controller." (3.7.3.23)

The meaning of the famous passage in the Upanishad, "Thou are that," should be taken in the same light.

1 .Thou are that." According to Shri Vallabhacharya, this passage does not demonstrate that the individual soul is Brahman, but points towards an intimacy between the individual soul and the Lord..

The word atma in the above compound phrase, sarvatma. bhava is in the locative. 2 Here, the subject (the individual soul} and the object (The Lord) of love are identical. Because of the" usage of the word "atma (which means both the Supreme and the soul) love of God has a unity with the individual soul. Inc the Path of Grace, love of God is not based on duality between the soul and God, as in other systems, because the knowledge and love that occurs for the Self naturally posses a feeling of unity.

LOVE NOT HOSTILITY

Total love is not exemplified in the following Bhagavata passage, "While sitting, standing, eating, drinking, sleeping. awaking, or walking around. Kamsa saw only Krishna, the Lord of the senses, because of his hostile feelings for Him."

Although the Lord is experienced everywhere in this verse. mental state is caused by hostility. not love. Sridhar Svami expounds this same concept, "Total Love is solitary devotion,and is further explained, "Solitary devotion for Krishna is experiencing Him everywhere."

Therefore, Total Love is to have a feeling of identity between the Lord and all things.

PATHS OF LAW AND GRACE

This experience of Total Love is of two types in accordance with the Path of Law and the Path of Grace. King Ambaris:a exemplifies the first type to Total Love in the ninth canto of the Bhagavata, "Having Total Love and firm faith in God, King Ambarisa ruled the earth according to the guidance of the Brahmins." 3

Total Love in the Pure Blessed Path of Grace is found in the

2 The compound phrase, "sarvatmabhava" can be put in the genitive case which would mean, "Total love of the Self"; but here, the compound phrase has been put into the locative which makes it mean "Total love for the Self." The reason for putting the compound word into the locative is that love of the Self has a shade of duality between the soul and God while total love for the Self implies unity.

3 This type of total love occurs from knowing the greatness of God.

tenth canto of the Bhagavata in the account of the Gopis of Braja. Because of the intensity of their emotion in separation from Krishna, they experienced Him everywhere and realized Total Love. It is greater than the Total Love in the Path of Canon because of the many amorous sentiments for Lord Krishna that mingle with Total Love and which are very useful in experiencing the great joy of devotion. Pure Blessed Devotees experience this.

BRAHMA SUTRAS

Commenting upon the Brahma Sutras VaIlabhacharya says, "Here, Vyasa is describing the nature of Total Love. In Total Love, when one experiences divine separation form the Lord. due to intense attachment, the Lord appears everywhere as is related in the Chando Upanishad, He is before you, He is every where."

After this, another experience may occur: While having Total Love a feeling of unity with God occurs. The Chando Upanishad relates this experience, " And then comes the super imposition of the ego 4 and one feels I am below, I am above, I am behind, I am before, I am everywhere."

These are both transitory moods of Total Love. Finally, God is felt as ones own Self. That phenomenon is related in the same Upanishad, " And then the superimposition of the Self occurs and one feels, the Self is below, the Self is above, the Self is behind, the Self is before, the Self is everywhere.

In the Blessed Path, Total Love is mixed with the amorous mood and experienced by pure blessed devotees. VaIlabhacharya has clarified this in his Anubhasya.

Total Love in the Path of Law has been revealed in the Veda Stuti part of the Subodhini and was achieved by King Ambarisa and other Bhaktas. 5 Both types of Total Love, i.e. the Blessed Path of Grace and the Path of Law, should be

4 The ego mentioned here is not mundane but a diviIJe pride that the devotional soul feels upon experiencing God. Then the ego is merged with the Supreme.

5 Total love in the Path of Cannons is primarily mixed with the mood of tranquillity.

Known by the wise as the perfection of devotion.

SARVATAMA BHAVAS DIFFERENT MEANINGS

It is not proper to say that Uddhavas passage in the Bhagavata, "you have achieved sarvatama bhava for Krishna" is the Total Love described before in this chapter because Vallabhacharya explains that Uddbava says sarvata bhava in the sense, "I have understood all the devotional love of your hearts."

Even though these Gopis of Braja had experienced the above mentioned Blessed Paths Total Love, Uddhava was not able to grasp the inner core of their love. He could only know of their exterior expression of amorous love for Krishna because they said to him, "O black bee, you are a friend of the deceitful Krishna. Dont touch our feet."

We have said before that Total Love is the culmination or .devotion. In the following passage, the word total love is not used in this technical sense, but as a means to achieve the Lords surrender.

"Uddhava, all embodied beings who surrender their souls to , me with total love, become fearless." (Bhagavata 11.12.15)

The Lord is blessing Uddhava here to take his surrender with Total love.

This difference in the meaning of the same word is clarified in Vallabhacharyas Anubhasya by the word athava. In this way, the attributes and greatness of Total Love has been revealed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FRUIT OF THE BLESSED PATH

PAR EXCELLENT DEVOTION

Now we will discuss the nature of the fruit of the Blessed , Path of Devotion. In this connection, Uddhava says to the Gopis of Braja, "You maidens of Braja have shown the finest devotion to the Lord. It is rare even among the great sages.(Bhagavata 10.47.25)

I Other passage reveal the same truth. The Gopis reward willbe explained in this chapter.

NIRODHA 1

The second canto of the Bhagavata relates, "Nirodha is the different divine sport the Supreme Self plays with His. powers."

"Supreme Self" here means the Blessed Lord and the word for play, "anushaya," here does not not take on its normal meaning of sleep but means the Lord takes on a form according to the divine sport of lila. In the word "purusha" which means. man or Supreme Lord we see the same root, "shete" which in. that word also does not mean sleep but rather condition or play

1 Nirodha here is to be translated as constraint, while in Yoga terminology it means control. Although constraint generally has a negative meaning, when it is used in conjunction with Krishna, it is positive in a spiritual sense. Krishna constraint his bhaktas so they are unable to leave his divine sport in order to enter into the world. of maya.

And so, from Sukadevas words in the Bhagavata, "Nirodha is the different divine sports the Supreme Self plays with His powers." The word anushaya takes on that special meaning of play. This is also revealed in Shri Vallabhacharyas Subodhini and Nibandha.,

The word "anushaya" refers to the Lords proper presence for the divine sport. Shri Vallabhacharya says in his Subodhini .and Nibandha that, "Nirodha is Krishnas presence in the world sporting with His unimaginable powers. (Bhagavatartha 10.14.., 15)

THREE SPORTS

The Lords "nirodha" sport is of three types varying according to the three types of bhaktas, tamas, rajas and sattva. In order to constrain their minds, the Lord performed three different worldly like sports. This phenomena is related in the Subodhini, "Because the soul is unable to change its nature, the Lord . performs three different types of sports for the three different types of souls." (Subodhini 10.5.6)

Through these three different sports, bhaktas become forgetful of the world and attached to the Lord. This is nirodha which means utmost constraint into the Lord.

Question: Who is constrained ?

Answer: If we look to the ninth canto of the Bhagavat we see that it is the Lords bhaktas who are constrained by the Lord into His divine reality. 3

Vallabhacharya explains this occurrence. "The bhaktas who are described in the ninth canto of the Bhagavata are going to be constrained into the Lord, which is the subject matter of the tenth canto to make them ready for liberation which is thesubject matter of the eleventh canto."

Shri Vallabhacharya further reveals the nature of. nirodha. ..Those whom Hari has set free, flounder in the worldly ocean

2 The three different sports where played in Braja Mathura and Dwarka which represent respectively the tamasi rajas, and sattva plays of Krishna.

3 The stories of the Lords devotees is the theme of the ninth cant<, which introduces the tenth canto, how the bhaktas receive nirodha.

while those he has constrained, are blissful day and night." (Nirodha Laskhana 11)

FORGETFUL OF THE WORLD

A person who remembers the false world is not qualified for nirodha and can not experience the Lords divine sports. The Gita says in this context, "The fool who suppresses senses outwardly while contemplating upon objects of sense is a hypocrite." (Gita 3.6) .

For nirodha, forgetfulness of the false world is necessary. For this reason the "ni", which means "utmost" in the word nirodha is placed before the root "rodha" which creates the meaning, "utmost constraint from the mayic worldly experience into the Lord."

Question: Where are the bhaktas to be constrained ?

Answer: In the Lord. Sri Vallabhacharya says in this: context, "When bhaktas are constrained into Krishna, they are liberated." (Bhagavatartha 10.16)

Because the experience of nirodha gives rise to the extremely. pleasing sports of the Lord, un attachment to everything else occurs. If nirodha was just mere control of the senses, it wopldi not create the great joy. The Bhagavata reveals the condition of the souls who try forcibly to control their minds, "Most yogis who try to forcibly control their minds finally fall into a sorrowful state and dont achieve samadhi. (Bhagavata 11.29.2)

And so, those who forget the world, because of the Lords divine joy become attached to Him. That type of nirodha is defined as, "Attachment to the Lord, having forgotten the false world."

This reality is related in the Bhagavata, "While relating the

4 This is paradox that those who have freedom flounder in the worldly, ocean. Here freedom does not mean liberation, but freedom to go into the worldly ocean while those who are constraint by Krishna into the divine lila, are blissful day and night. The pastimes or Krishna are filled with paradox. Instead of being born in a palace, Krishna was born in a jail. The controller of life and death, then had to flee Gokul to save himself. But, those who are constrained by him, are always blissful.

sports of Rama and Krishna, Nanda and the other Gopas became absorbed and did not experience the afflictions of the world." (Bhagavata 10.11.58)

Later in the same text a similar condition is revealed, "The Yadus minds were always attached to Krishna. While sleeping, eating, wandering about, speaking, playing, bathing and sitting etc., they were unaware of themselves; they were completely engrossed in Krishna." (Bhagavata 10.90.46)

That divine sport which the Lord performs in the world, which enables the soul to forget the mayic world and become attached to Him is the dharma of the soul. This is all revealed in the tenth canto of the Bhagavata.

In this context, Shri Vallabhacharya says, "The Lords birth occurs when Hari incarnated in the world, conjoined with all powers of action, in order to bless everyone with His sight. Those bhaktas who adhere their minds to Him, forget the false world and become divinely attached." (Bhagavatartha 10.20)

TAMASTHREE TYPES

After the chapters which deal with the Lords appearance, follows the chapters which relate the sports of the tamas devo tees (the bhaktas of Braja) and their rewards. The Braja bhaktas have three types of tamasness.

I. Tamasness from which they are able to acquire the mood of devotion that is not prescribed in the scriptures. This is a. technical meaning of the word used in conjunction with the Path of Graces special terminology.

2. Tamasness as a kind of attribute. 5

3. Tamasness created by the Lords maya. 6

OBSTINACY

The first type of tamasness occurs when the Lord makes

5 For instance, the Gopis calling Krishna cruel is an example of this tamas quality.

6 This maya is not worldly, it is divine in nature and useful in Krishnas lila.

worldly like sports in accordance with the bhaktas desire. The bhaktas desires the Lords external manifestation, and become unable to withstand the pangs of His separation. This and other types of tamas devotion are predominated by obstinacy. Their insistence in their feeling for Krishna makes their devotion continual. Such bhaktas are without knowledge and are simple minded. Because they lack knowledge, they transgress the rules of the World and Vedas. The devotees of Braja, who exemplify this types of devotion, cherished obstinate love for Krishna and were devoid of knowledge unrelated to His divine sport. The Lord says in the Bhagavata, "For me they have left the world, Vedas and their relatives."

Because their characteristics resemble that of a tamas person in the world, they are called tamas devotees, but the hidden meaning here is not apparent. The Itareyopa Sruti explains this subtlety, "The gods like to speak in words that have a deeper meaning that their apparent one." (1.3.4)

The Lord mentions in this light, "l love those words which have a different face value than the esoteric one."

All of the bhaktas described in the chapters which deal with the fruit of the Tamas bhaktas are tamas, that is obstinate devotees.

TAMASNESS AS AN ATTRIBUTE

When their tamasness becomes an attribute, it makes the bhaktas act In a tamas fashion. For instance, the Bhagavata relates a tamas Gopis song, "Lord of love, from your glance, which steals the beauty of a autumn lotus flower blooming in a lake, we have become your unconditioned slaves. Charitable one. by killing us, wont you be guilty of murder ?" (10.31.2)

This type of tamas bhakti has it own particular flavour as does the rajas and sattva types of devotion.

In Braja, the tamas mood is predominate while in other places, the rajas or sattva mood is predominate. Within the chapters which deal with the fruit of the tamas devotees, some Gopis are classified as rajas, sattva and even nirguna, (beyond the qualities) but it should be known that these are secondary attributes; their predominating mood is tamas. In a similar

way, in the chapters which deal with the rajas bhaktas, we find tamas attributes. From instance in the Bhramar Gita one Gopis says in a tam as temperament while speaking with Krishnas friend Uddhava, "0 black bee, friend of the cunning Krishna." (Bhagavata 10.47.12) Other examples of tamas temperaments are found in those chapters which deal with the rajas bhaktas.

TAMAS MAYA

The third type of tamasness the Lord creates through his power of maya and connects it with those souls who are apart ,.of 7 "Enchanted by my maya, you did not ask liberation from Me." (10.3.39)

Other passage prove the existence of this special type of maya. The Bhagavata: relates. "He expanded the Yaishnavi ,maya." (10.8.43)

We can discern that this is a special type of maya because the root word, "Vaishnavi". It made the people of Braja attached 8 to their animals, children, and homes etc."

Another example of this special maya is: "Tired from spending the entire day involved in worldly chores, the people of Braja slept heavily at night." (Bhagavata 2.7.31)

" Sometimes this maya made them forgetful of even Krishna. ."Yashoda did not hear her son Krishna crying." (Bhaga

7 This passage is in reference to Krishnas parents Devaki and Vasudeva in their previous life when they "performed austerities and were offered a boon by the Lord. Instead of asking for liberation. the reason why they originally set out on a course of austerities, they were enchanted by the Lord maya and requested to have Him as their son. In this way, through the Lords divine maya, they would , .experience in their next birth bhakti for Shri Krishna , something they .would have missed if they had requested liberation. ..

.8 The creator Brahma, trying to deceive Krishna, stole away all of , Krishna cows and cow lads. Krishna understood Brahmas play and created as many cow lads and cows that Brahma had stolen and for one year they lived in Braja. Because the cows and the cow lads were Krishnas own form, the people of Braja unaware of the actual situation, spontaneously began to feel an additional fondness for their children and animals:

vata 10.7.6) "Breast feeding her son Krishna, she left hurriedly, leaving Him unsated." (Bhagavata 10.9.5)

At other times, the qualities of this special maya are seen in the Lord. The Bhagavata states, "Krishna has urinated in my place of worship." (10.8..31) and "the dead child Krishna be came revived." (10.7.32)

Other passages relate similar ignorant .conditions, created 9 by the Lords special maya. They are all Tamas.

REMOVAL OF TAMASNESS

Gradually, the qualities of tamas, created by the special maya, the Lord himself removes through the agency of His own sports or lilas. Krishna established these three types of tamasness and ultimately removed them in order to reveal the Lords. greatness in the Path of Grace and to reward souls who had practice 3 contradictory to scriptures, fruits difficult for even Brahma and other gods to achieve. These tam as bhaktas finally achieved nirodha.In order for future lilas to continue without. obstruction, the tamasness which made the Gopis unable to withstand Krishnas separation and consequently made their natures transgress the world and Vedas was removed.

The Bhagavata states, "We will go and stop Krishna. What: canto the family and elders of our clan do." (10.39.28)

RAJAS MOOD

They were unable to stop Krishna, because by this point in the Bhagavata, Krishna had removed their tamas natures. After this, the rajas mood entered the devotees of Braja. The Bhagavata.. states the nature of rajas, "When one is agitated in activity, the intellect without rest, the body unhealthy, and the mind con fused, know that it is all due to the predominance of rajas (11.25.17) The quality of rajas makes the mind waver.

9 Although based in ignorance, they have their use in the divine sport. They enhance devotion to Krishna by making Him humanly divine.

10 The Gopis said this when Krishna was about to leave Braja, the" abode of the dairy maids for Mathura.

When Krishna sent. his message to the Gopis through His friend Uddhava, He said. "you are not separated from me in any place or time because I am everyones Self. I am under the control of my bhaktas. I keep my promise. It is my nature to. shower grace over women." (Bhagavata 10.47.29)

After hearing the Lords teaching, the Gopis received knowledge of the self and realized at that point, "We are not separated from Krishna."

"Then hearing Krishnas message from Uddhava, the Gopis burning separation was removed. They understood Krsna who" is beyond the Self and offered worship to Uddhava." (Bhagavata 10.47.53)

After receiving that knowledge, the quality of rajas created agitation in the Gopis minds and they forgot that wisdom which is revealed in the Bhagavata, "Uddhava saw the Gopis restless ness, their hearts absorbed in Krishnas love." (Bhagavata. 10.47.57)

At that time, they again experienced the Lords separation and were sorrowful. While they "ere rajas and under the influence of Krishnas teachings, they were happy, without separation. When they became forgetful of that wisdom, they were afflicted with 12 joy and sorrow.

SATTVA REMOVED

After the rajas mood was removed, the sattva mood flared up and they became sattva. The Gita explains the mood or sattva, "From the quality of sattva, knowledge arises." (14.17)

Then the teachings of Uddhava remained firm in their hearts. For this reason the Gopis said at Kurushetra when they meet with Shri Krishna, "May our minds while engaged. in household activities always remain at your feet." (Bhagavata 10.82.49)

If the Gopis were under the influence of their previous rajas.or tamas moods, they would have prayed to Krishna that he:

11 "Grace over women " means grace over devotionally oriented souls.

12 An important aspect of devotion to Krishna is to experience both union and separation. They nourish each other and heighten devotion.

return to Braja. From this it is seen that the Gopis have realized that to have union with the Lord according to scriptural sanction is eternal and good.

After their sattva mood was removed, they became nirguna, that is beyond all qualities and their essential characteristics .of being a form of God became manifested. Then, they, entered the eternal sport, the final liberation. The Bhagavata says in this connection, "To leave all other forms and be established in "the true form is liberation." (2.10.6)

Then, everything, their dalliance and other relations with the Lord became God. They took his surrender and acquired the primordial nature.

TWO MEANINGS

Now we will discuss the present day rewards for followers of the Path of Grace.

There are two ways of understanding the Bhagavata. One is to consider the dictionary meaning of the words, while the second is to take into account the inner meaning which reveals . the spiritual aspect of the Lords sports. The dictionary meaning occurs in accordance with the syntax cal order of the words "while the inner meaning is understood after having insight into the purport of the Lords sport. For instance, the following passage exemplifies the dictionary meanings, "1 am under the control of my devotees." (Bhagavata 9.4.63)

The inner meaning is exemplifies in other passages. Some times when the Gopies coaxed, Krishna danced." (Bhagavata 10.11.7}

After we become aware of the dictionary meaning, that the Lord is under the control of his bhaktas, then we can understand to what extent the Lord is under the sway of such blessed souls.

The dictionary meaning of the passage. " A mans association With women is the cause of his fall." (Bhagavata 11.14.30) has the inner meaning revealed in the following passage, "Brahma" the Creator, seeing his beautiful daughter, became lusty." .l3

13 The story is related in the Bhagavata. Once,

(Bhagavata 11.14.30)

In this fashion. these two different types of meanings should be understood. The dictionary and esoteric portion of the Bhagavata have been classified in Shri Va1labhacharya.s Subodhini and Nibandha in the various accounts which depict the Lords 1ila.

PRESENT DAY REWARDS

How the present day divine souls can achieve the Lord. Krsna relates in the Bhagavata. "Uddhava, from following dharma and surrendering ones soul to Me, devotion is received.

In the Gita, Krishna says. "That person who with one pointedness. worships Me through devotion, transcends the material: qualities and achieves the Supreme... (14.26)

The dictionary meaning of the above mentioned passage and: other similar statements reveals that after one achieves the transcendental state of nirguna. beyond the qualities. the divine reward is achieved. The inner meaning is the divine experience:. Shri Vallabhacharya has revealed in his Subodhini and Nibandha according to the teachings of the Bhagvata. This, will now be explained for interested readers.

Because of a special type of grace. the Lord desires to reward some souls with a special type of reward. To accomplish this. he implants the seed of blessed devotion within those souls who belong to the Path of Grace. Now we will explain the:" means through which they achieve their goals.

The Bhagavata relates, " All is governed through the three qualities (11.25.30)

All souls have these three qualities. but they are called tamas, rajas or sattva according to their predominating quality.

SATTVA BHAKT AS

Sattva bhaktas worship and listen to the Lords stories etc.,

saw his daughter Saraswati. and became full of lust. Perhaps it i!> for this reason that Brahmas worship is confined to a single holy place in all of India. Pushkar Rajasthan.

:and through those means, love quickly arises in their hearts Shri Vallabhacharya says in this context, "Those bhaktas who are sattva in nature, are qualified for liberation. (Shastratha 2)

He goes on to say, "I teach my doctrine for the sattva bhaktas." (Sarvanirnaya 224)

The sattva bhaktas have the highest spiritual qualification, the rest are mediocre or lower in qualification. In the 9th canto, 1he different qualifications of bhaktas have been depicted. The Lords incarnation and the stories of his bhaktas is called "ishanukatha", (the ninth canto).

AGE OF STRUGGLE

In this current age of struggle, due to impurities, confusion :and greed etc, tamas and rajas are predominate. Before the .appearance of these modes, the Lord established the seed of pusthi devotion which is pure and eternal in certain souls. But, because of powerful impurities, they are not able to achieve the highest devotion of pure love, but are able to perform actions related to the Lords worship. In this respect the Bhagavata says, "Respectfully perform His worship." (11.19.29)

By worshipping the Lord and listening to His glories etc, the seed of devotion is strengthened and then gradually, the three qualities are removed .as the Gita reveals.. "That person who with onepointed ness worships me through devotion, .achieves the Supreme." (14.26)

BRAJA, MATHURA, AND DWARKA LILAS

This principle has been shown in the Bhagavata in the ,accounts of the people of Braja. Krishna first removed their tamas nature, then went on to liberate them of their rajas and sattva natures. Shri Vallabhacharya explains, "When Krishna went to Mathura, the Braja devotees tamasness was removed. While He remained in Mathura they were rajas. When Krishna went to Dwarka, the bhaktas of Braja became Sattva. After this Krishna removed their sattva natures and they all became nirguna. For their ultimate liberation, this has all be revealed." (Bhagavatartha 10.126.127)

POWER OF GRACE

Question: For the time Krishna remained in Braja, the residents of Braja were tamas. After Krishna left Braja, His lila was ,no longer outwardly manifested there, nor did the Braja devo. tees perform any scriptural practices. How then did their tamas :natures become removed ?

Answer: This is explained in the Bhagavat Prakarna by Shri Vallabhacharya. If their situation is considered according to the rules of the cannons of devotion. then there is no reason for the removal of their tamas mood and if something happens without reason. chaos ensues. But. when Hari takes away their tamas nature, the rules of the scriptures become weak. and the situation become justified. Here because the power of ..grace predominated there was no scope for the scriptural rule. Because of the power of grace. the residents of Braja left their tamas natures and became rajas. Of this there is not doubt. **In** this way. there are no contradictions. nor is scriptural law broken. Even if this phenomena can not be justified according to scriptural evidence in the light of grace. it is perfectly justified.

DIVINE EXAMPLE

The Upanishads described the Braja bhaktas in the eternal lila in the following words. "Nanda is supreme bliss. Yashoda is the form of liberation The Gopis and the cows are the personified Srutis.. (Krsnopanisad)

Even though the Braja bhaktas have been glorified in this divine way, the present day divine soul is able to take their example. to some small extent.

Question: If Pushti devotion is nirguna. how can a pushti ,bhakta be called tamas or rajas.

Answer: The Bhagavata reveals this phenomena in Vratasura who was a devotees of grace beyond the material qualities yet tamas, "0 Brahmin, the sinful Vratasura was by nature rajas and tamas." (6.14.1)

Other passages prove that he was a blessed devotee. For instance he said. "Like a baby bird whose feathers have not

appeared, looks anxiously for its mother, so I anxiously look for You my Lord." (Bhagavata 6.12.6)

Bhakti can be nirguna, beyond the qualities, yet its devotees can have the three different qualities. The Lord says, "Whoever makes my bhakti with violent intentions is a tamas bhakta." (Bhagavata 3.29.8) ,

Other similar passages relate different types of devotion that are motivated by the three material qualities. There is also a unmotivated devotion that is transcendental. The bhaktas who follow that devotion may also have the three different types of natures.

PRESENT DAY MEANS

From here onwards, I will relate the spiritual process or worship, listening to the Lords glories etc., for the modern day blessed soul. They do require some procedure in their practice through which tamas qualities are removed.

When the Lord took birth in the home of Nanda and Yashoda, there was a grand celebration, in the same way, present day bhaktas should celebrate the day their receive their Krishna deity. ,

In the Sevaprakarana Shri Vallabhacharya says, "The Lord takes the oath, "1 will liberate the soul through this deity, and then appears in the form of clay and other materials." (228) For this reason, the image should be accepted as the Lords. manifestation.

In the Bhagavata is related that Nanda heard Vasudeva say, "Dont stay too long in Mathura, for in Gokul there are many forebiding calamities." (Bhagavata 150.5.31)

There are many other similar passages which provide know ledge of things that obstruct the Lords pleasure. In a similar way, present day bhaktas should learn about the obstacles.. within the Path of Devotion from the guru.

14 Because it is transcendental, all the attributes which the Bhaktas have are also divine. Their qualities may seem mundane, but because they are directed towards the Lord they are devoid of mundane attributes but replete with the divine. Hence they are both "nirguna", beyond the qualities and "saguna", replete with divine qualities.

DEMONS

Then, in the Bhagavata there is the incident of the demoness Putana, who is considered to be the form of ignorance as Shri Vallabhacharya reveals, "The demoness Putana, the form of ignorance, was destroyed." (Subodhini 10.6.14.1)

It is not proper to assume that the demoness Putana, the demon Baka and other demons were free from ignorance and hypocrisy because in the Krishna Upanishad it is mentioned. "Greed, anger and the other demons."

This passage reveals that besides the form of the demons that .one is able to see, there are other demonical forms like. "Greed, anger and the other demons." The words, "and the other" refers to all the various types of demonical natures.

Shri Vallabhacharya explains in the Subodhini that the demon Dhenuka and other demons who manifested during Krishnas Incarnation were the personified forms of confusing the body for the soul and other types of ignorance. This is sup ported by the passage from the Krishna Upanishad.

When the blessed Lord killed the demoness Putana, it represented the removal of all ignorance. For present day bhaktas, to remove the ignorance which keeps them turned away from the Lord, His blessed worship should be performed. The Bhagavata says, "By worshipping Lord Vishnu once, a man attains a status similar to the Lords." (6.18.66)

HARIS SHELTER

When Krishnas father Nanda heard from Vasudeva about , the calamities of Gokul, "He took Haris shelter" (Bhagavata 10.6.1.) to overcome them. Similarly, in this present day, after hearing from the guru about the obstacles that that keep one acquiring devotion, the devotee should seek Haris shelter. Shri from Vallabhacharya says in the Nibandha, "In the first chapters {Bhagavata 10.6) which deal with the Tamas devotees in the tenth canto, many obstacles on the Path of the Blessed Lord were revealed but in the following chapter it is revealed that those obstructions were removed by Hari." (Bhagavatartha 10.5253)

OBSTACLES REMOVED THROUGH LILA

In the seventh chapter in the tenth canto it is revealed that" Krishna kicked with his feet which are the personified form of devotion, a cart which is the form of the home ladened with things that the soul is falsely attached to, whereby all the products were hurled from the cart. In a similar fashion, things that are not related to the Lord are removed for the present day devotees.

In the Bhagavata it is revealed how the Lord killed the demon Trinavarta, the rajas form of ignorance, who obstructed souls from coming face to face with the Lord Similarly, for the present day bhaktas, through the Lords grace, the qualities; of rajas that obstruct bhakti practices are removed.

Krishnas mother Yashoda gained knowledge of the Lords. greatness when she saw the cosmic form of the universe within her sons mouth. Similarly, present day followers of the Path of Grace can experience the greatness of their personal worship able form of Shri Krishna through dreams and other divine" experiences.

In the fourth chapter of the Tamasa Prakarana (Bhagavat 10.8) Garga secretly revealed to Nanda and Yashoda Krishnas names as well as his forms, qualities, and plays in the following.. Bhagavata passage, "Your son has many names and forms. His attributes and deeds I recognize, while the common man can not." (10.8.15)

The word "has" (Sanskrit "santi") in the previous passages reveals that his name, form, attributes, and deeds are eternal. So, it is proven that bhaktas, while avoiding all impious. association should, after hearing the words and divine names.. from other blessed devotees that reveal the greatness of Krishnas qualities and pastimes, remember that precise form, attribute and lila while repeating the Lords name. For instance, when one says Krishnas name, "Govardhanoddharandhira", "The Supporter of the Govardhana Hill," the special form of Krishna, , holding the Govardhana Mount with his lotus like left hand, should be contemplated within the heart. This process has been explained in Shri Vallabhacharyas Subodhini (10.8.15) which deals with Krishnas naming ceremonies.

CRAWLING KRISHNA

In the Bhagavata, the pastimes of infant Krishna crawling on his knees is revealed. In this context, in the ninth canto of the same scripture it is mentioned, "The Supreme Being possesses a universal form. His two knees are the under nether worlds."

In this passage the nether regions, the sphere of the demons is revealed as being a part of the Lord and therefore divine. And so, when infant Krishna crawled on his knees, in a esoteric manner, he removed (liberated) those demons. In a similar fashion, for present day devotees, without them even being aware of it, the Lord takes on many forms and removes numerous demonical moods.

When Krishna stole butter and did other mischievous activities, the dairy maids of Braja complained about those pranks to his mother Yashoda. Because she was overwhelmed by love for her child, she did not know the greatness of her son and therefore, did not accept any faults as existing within her son and "did not wish to reprimand her son."

In a similar fashion, for present. day devotees, even if they are devoid of knowledge, but have an inclination to serve the Lord, , do not see faults in the Lord.

DID NOT EAT DIRT

In the Bhagavata, the Lord said to his mother after his friends told her that he had eaten dirt, "I did not eat any dirt." (10.8.35)

Here he revealed that the ordinary practice of eating does not pertain to the Supreme Being. The Srutis reveal the cause of mans eating habits, "Hunger is mans nephew." (That is, it is an inherited habit.)

Other Sruti passages revealithat hunger, the cause of eating , is a special attribute of man. Therefore, it is natural that this quality is not found in the Supreme Lord and for this reason. Shri Krishna said that he did not eat the dirt.

The Lord will eat foods that are offered to Him with loving devotion as he promises in the Gita Leaves, flowers, fruits, water, whatever my bhaktas offer me with devotion, I accept

and enjoy them."

In that passage, the Lord uses the word "asanam" not in the sense of eating, for he does not eat flowers, but it should be understood to mean he enjoys them. The Lord accepts and enjoys those things offered to him with devotion like cloth. jewels, garlands, and other offering. Understanding this bhaktas should in all devotional ways take offerings to the Lord. This has been explained in Shri Vitthalnathjis interpolation of Shri Vallabhacharyas Subodhini on the part of the Bhagavata where Krishna was reported to have eaten dirt.

When Mother Yashoda perceived her child as a mortal, she thought that he had eaten dirt. Then, when she looked inside his mouth to find some evidence of dirt, she beheld the universal form residing within his mouth. At that moment, Krishna revealed to her that he is devoid of all common mundane attributes and Yashoda realized that, "Under the influence of the deluding maya I have thought the Gopis, cow lads and cows are all mine." (Bhagavata 10.8.42)

DIVINE MAYA

Upon achieving this knowledge, her parental love for Krishna became concealed, and only reappeared when the Lord employed his divine Vaishnavi maya, which controls souls in the lila, and enchanted her through that force to love him again as her child. The Bhagavata relates, "The Lord then spread out his Vaishnavi maya."

We learn from this that worldly feelings toward the divine form, are removed through knowing about the Lords greatness and this is achieved through the Bhagavata and other special resources. When there is an extreme amount of knowledge concerning the Lords greatness, loving worship of the Lord can slacken. Then, the Lord showers his grace and through the association of lovefilled bhaktas, the devotee begins to lovingly worship the Lord which makes the devotees faith firm.

GRACE OF GREAT SOULS

In the Bhagavata we see that Nanda and Yashoda in their previous birth received through the grace of great souls, loving devotion to the Blessed Lord. "Intent on carrying out the bequest of Brahma the creator, Drona, the for most of the Vasus.

along with his wife, Dhara spoke to Brahma, "When we are born again on this earth, let the highest type of devotion appear in us towards, Shri Hari, the supreme Deity, the Ruler of the universe, through which one is sure to escape from evil destiny in this world.

"Their wish granted, he was born in Vraja and became the ;: illustrious Nanda while Dhara became Yashoda." (Bhagavata 10.8.4850)

In a similar way, through the grace of Shri Vallabhacharya ; and Shri Vitthalnathji, devotion to the Blessed Lord is Possible

DEVOTIONAL SONGS AND OFFERINGS

The Bhagavata relates, "While churning the curd, mother Yashoda remembered and sang about the Lords lilas." (10.9.2)

In a similar fashion, present day bhaktas should sing the Lords praises while engaged in worldly tasks.

In the two accounts when child Krishna broke the pots of ; buttermilk and also when he took butter which was hanging in c. a basket and fed i t to the monkeys, it is revealed that the Lord does not accept things from people who are not filled with the devotional mood and who desire to use things for themselves without first offering them. Therefore, from the time something is offered to the Lord, till he has fully enjoyed it, the mind c should be fully engrossed in the Blessed Lords.

BHAKTAS CONTROL

When mother Yashoda caught :Krishna feeding butter to the , , monkeys, she became distressed and tried to tie her son with some string, but it always fell a few inches short. Seeing distressful condition, Shri Krishna became merciful and allowed Himself to be bound, an indication of how he is under the control of his bhaktas. In this way it was proven that bhaktas are able to have the Lord under their control not by simply worshipping and offering many things, but only through pure devotion.

BHATKAS ASSOCIATION

Later. the account of the Yamala and Arjuna trees is related in the Bhagavata(10.9.2210.11.6). Once, the great bhakta

Narada saw Nala Kuba and Maigirva doing very sinful activities with other women. In order to uplifit them, he made them take birth in Braja as two Yamala and Arjuna trees and promised them they would later be liberated by the Lord Himself. So the Lord says in the Bhagavata, "I will act according to what the great sage Narada has said." (10.10.25)

The Lord said that he would liberate them, because they were accepted by his bhakta Narada. From this it is proven that from the association of bhaktas, everything is accomplished.

After this the Bhagavata relates, "When thc Gopis coaxed Krishna, he began to dance." This and other passages further prove how the Lord is under the control of his bhaktas.

PLAYTHINGS AND BELOVED THINGS

Then, the Bhagavataexplains the sports Lord Krishna played in Vrindavan, "Taking many things for play. Krishna, accompanied by his brother Balaram .and other cow lads grazed their calves near to Braja." (Bhagavata 10.U.3)

Shri Vallabhacharya comments on that passage, "Black tees, a discus, a small cane, wooden blocks, a toy chariot and musical instruments and other things were his playthings."

From this passage it i$ shown that while performing Shri Krishnas seva, such playthings should be placed near the Lord.

In the 15th chapter of the tenth canto it is mentioned, "In this way, Ba1aram and Krsna played in Vrindavan like they were ordinary children." (10.15.16)

The Lord enlightens, "Offer to me those things that your desire in the world, as well as those things that are beloved to you. By doing so, one become qualified for liberation." (Bhagavata 11.11.41)

For further discussion on this subject, please refer to book Sevakaumudi.

IMPURITIES REMOVED

Next comes the removal of the demon Vatsasura, who disguised himself as a calf in hopes of killing Krishna. He represents, in actual form, the things that were impure while Krishna

.razed the calves. By making short work or that demon, the *Calves attained purity. fu a similar way, all things that are offered to the Lord should be purified.

After Vatsasura, the demon Bakasura was killed. He represented the impure form or the cow lads. He was a hypocrite and his lower and upper beaks were greed and deception. By "doing away with him, those impurities were removed. futhersame way, bhaktas falsehood, greed, pride, and other impurities .are removed through the Lords seva.

KRISHNA LOVE

Then the Bhagavata reveals that, Nanda and the other cow herders sang Krishnas glories." (10.1 1.58) As their songs of praise were replete with love for Krishna, in a similar spirit, represent day bhaktas should sing the glories of the Lord and his devotees.

In this way, from the fifth to eleventh chapter in the tenth Canto of the Bhagavata, the residents of Braja love for Shri Krishna became perfected. From understanding their means, present day bhaktas can fill their hearts with the same divine Love.

PURIFICATION

Like the demon Dhenukasura was the personified form of confusing the body for the soul, and therefore liberated by the immortal Lord; present day bhaktas, by performing the Lords seva can remove the confusion of mistaking the body for the soul.

Then the Lord placed his lotus feet which are the form of .devotion, upon the hoods of the poisonous snake Kaliya who .was the personified form of senses that miscognized real object When Krishna killed Kaliya he purified those misdirected senses. The wives of Kaliya realizing the import of the Lords actions prayed, "you have graced this king of serpents."

In a similar way, those senses which are turned away from God, .toward mayic miscognized objects, are purified through devotion and then are able to adhere to the Lord.

As the Lord saved all the residents of Braja by swallowing a forest fire which represented the impureform of those senses

that are filled with pride, in a similar way, the Lord protects present day bhaktas from the impurities of prideful senses that give rise to demonical moods.

Like the impurities that occur within the inter faculty or cognition which appeared during Krishnas incarnation in the. form of the demon Pralambasura " ho was subsequently done away with by the Lord, present day bhaktas can have the same impurity removed by performing the Lords Seva.

Ignorance of the true nature of the soul appeared as the second forest fire in Braja which Krishna extinguished. In a similar fashion, the Lord removes that ignorance that obstructs present day bhaktas from knowing their divine forms.

KRISHNAS PRAISES

As in the 18th chapter it is described how the Gopis who were fined with great love for the Blessed Lord, sang his praises,. in the same way, present day bhaktas. while not actively involved in the Lords seva, should sing Krishnas praises .

ONE REFUGE

.When the Lord halted the sacrifice to the rain god Indra and directed his father and the other cow herders to make the sacrifice to the Supreme Being, Indra became angry that his worship was stopped and showered destructive rains upon the area. To protect the Braja residents from the torrents, child Krishna up held the Govardhan hill on his hand above his head for seven day. The lila showed that devotees of the Blessed Lord should take no other refuge than Krishnas. If his shelter is taken and a. calamity arises, it should be firmly believed that he will nourish and protect.

Bhaktas should also follow the prescribed courses for the different stages of life as well as perform righteous actions like: charity etc eat offered foods, and leaving all other supports" single. mindedly serve Shri Krishna.

THE GOPIS AND THE BRAHMAN WIVES

Concerning the accounts in the Bhagavata which reveal how

the Gopis conducted a month long fast in order to secure Shri Krsna as their husband, as well as in the episode of the wives of the Brahmins who fed Krishna after their husbands who were involved in a sacrifice has refused to feed, the Blessed Lord, Shri Vallabhacharya explains, "Shri Krishnas teaching should always be adhered to. After removing all confusion and maya, one should be like a tree and subsist on eating pure offered food." (10.92. Nibandha)

Shri Vallabhacharyas passage reveals that in the accounts of the fasting Gopis as well as in the story of the wives of the Brahmins, they both left all sense of shame and received the Lords grace. From this it is learned that the Lords words in the Srutis and Smrtis etc., should always be followed.

Now the passage, "After removing confusion and maya, one should remain like a tree", is explained. When confusion which arises from maya and creates a false sense of myness removed, one becomes like a tree, that is, intent on being benevolent. The Lord praises the nature of trees in the Bhagavata, "0, they have the greatest birth... From their shoots, peoples desires are fulfilled" (10.22.3334) as well as in other passages, the Lord teaches benevolence.

Now the passage "and subsist by eating pure offered food." is explained. When Krishnas cow lads said in the Bhagavata "we are hungry", Krishna replied, "Go to the wives of the Brahmins and tell them that Krishna has arrived with Balaram."

The Lord sent them to the Brahmins wives and there they received food which removed their hunger. The wives were great souls as the Bhagavata relates, "Taking with them vessels full of excellent food, they all marched towards their beloved Lord, like rivers flowing towards the ocean, even though they ",ere being stopped by their husbands, brothers, sons and other relations. Their minds were set on the illustrious Lord, because they had heard of Him for a long time." (Bhagavata 10,23.1920)

From this incident it is learned that food should only be taken from bhaktas, and for this reason Vallabhacharya says "and subsist by eating pure offered food."

ADDICTION

The Bhagavata then relates the Gopis attachment to Shri Krishna, "The Gopis praised to each other, all the pastimes of Shri Krishna who sports in Vrindavan, and became absorbed into the Lord."

Present day bhaktas should follow similar means to become , attached to the Lord. Then. through the Lords grace, when , all impurities and obstacles are removed, the bhakta, through listening to His glories etc., becomes addicted to the Lord. Then, gradually all the qualities of tamas, rajas and sattva are .removed and the soul becomes situated in the Lords lila. The Bhagavata explains that stage, "The Lord took the Gopas beyond the darkness and gave them the sight of his infinite realm which is truth and knowledge. That Brahman is splendid and eternal "

In this way, the bhaktas had the experience or the Supreme realm while existing within material spheres. By worshipping, one can become addicted to the Blessed Lord, which destroys all mundane qualities and allows the soul the experience Of Brahman.

The Bhagavata say in this context, "That bhakti yoga has been called par excellence from which the practitioner can cross the three material qualities and achieve the perfect love for the Lord."

THE REWARD

Then the Bhagavata goes on to relate the reward of the tamas bhaktas (the Gopis of Vrindavan) who had total love for Shri Krishna, and experienced the supreme bliss of worship (bhajan ananda). Present day bhaktas who have total love for the Lord always experience the manifestation of the Blessed Lord and in their worship they too experience the fruit of the supreme bliss of worship.

The Brahma Sutras say, "Leaving the gross body" the soul achieves a subtle body that is useful in the Lords eternal lila." (Brahma Sutra 4.1.19)

LIBERATION

That is liberation and is revealed in the Bhagavata, "To leave all other forms and to remain firm in the lord is liberation." The Upanishads say in this context, "With the all knowledgeable blissfilled Brahman, all desires are enjoyed." (Taittiriya 2.1.1)

In this way, the Srutis have advised to have transcendental .enjoyment with the Supreme Being. From that sport, the final refuge is achieved.

Shri Vallabhacharya says in his Subodhini, "After explaining the lila in which the bhaktas received "nirodha" into Shri Krishna, (the tenth canto) the chapter of liberation is revealed "(the eleventh canto) for the scriptures pronounce that only those who take His shelter (the subject of the last canto in the Bhagavata, the 12th) are liberated."

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE NATURE OF COGNITION

PANEGYRIC

For the acquisition of the bliss of worship, I bow to Shri Krsna, the Holder of the Govardhana Hill, the love of the Gopis life; engaged in the rasa dance.

I bow to child Krishna, a treasure of bliss, the moon of the: Gopis chakor bird eyes.

I bow to Shri Vallabhacharya, propagator of the Path of Grace. To please Krsna, I take the shelter of Shri Vitthaleshas feet.

Those, subjects, which I briefly discussed before in my Ocean of Jewels, I will now explain in detail in this concluding portion.

TO UNDERSTAND THE WORLD

In the first part of the Ocean of Jewels, I discussed the nature of the world. In order to strengthen understanding 01 that topic, it is necessary to explain the theory of cognition. Without knowledge of cognition, it is not possible to understand the form of the world. Now, according to the teachings of Shri

1 Cognition is the foundation of all philosophical system. Howa system views the world, as true, false, or a mixture of the two is determined by conceptions of cognition. For instance, in Buddhism. perception devoid of imagination is cognition, Sankaracharya puts. the fault of illusion upon the power of maya. Other schools go the extreme of saying that there is no indistinct knowledge, everything is distinct knowledge.

Vallabhacharyas Subodhinis third chapter, we will consider the nature of cognition.

INDISTINCT KNOWLEDGE

When a shell is perceived by the faculty of attention through the senses, indistinct knowledge arises. This knowledge occurs "when the senses perceive an object, but before doubt and other types of knowledge about the object occur. After indistinct knowledge, when the mind is under the control of the pure .quality of sattvika, correct cognition occurs. It is a valid perception. In this text Shri Vallabhacharya says, "That intelligence, conjoined with sattvika produces valid knowledge." .{Sarvanirnaya 147)

DISTINCT KNOWLEDGE

According to the Bhagavata, distinct knowledge is produced "through the intellect. "Doubt, error, certitude, memory, and ream are the different functions of the intellect. Intellect creates distinct knowledge which succeeds indistinct knowledge of an object. It facilitates sensory perception." (Bhagavata 3.26.30)

Therefore, first the minds faculty of attention comes into contact with the senses which creates indistinct knowledge about things. This, in turn, produces different effects in the intellect according to the Influence of the qualities of tamas rajas and sattvika. Then, different types of knowledge ensue in the intellect in the form of doubt and memory. This is called distinct knowledge.

The Subodhini says in this respect, " After indistinct know ledge of an object occurs, impressions, brightness and other types of distinct knowledge of the object are formed in the intellect.. The eyes by themselves cannot give any type of ..comparative knowledge." (Subodhini 3,26.29)

2 Indistinct knowledge occurs when the senses first perceive some thing, before there is any judgement on what it is.. Distinct knowledge occurs when a judgement on what it is made by the intellect. Clear determination is when the intellect properly cognises the object.

The Lakshmi tantra states, "The senses perceive an object; it .is judged with the mind, related to oneself through the ego and ultimately cognised through the intellect." (13.34)

INTELLECT CREATES DISTINCT KNOWLEDGE

Some people think that the faculty of attention, the senses, and the subjects perceived are the causes of distinct knowledge, ..not of the intellect. In our school of thought, we agree with the Lords words in the third canto of the Baavata, that the Intellect creates doubt and other types of distinct knowledge,while the perception created through the faculty of attention and the senses produces indistinct knowledge. For instance, after the eyes perceive a shell, but before any judgement is. placed on what it is, indistinct knowledge occurs. When the Lords maya creates the tamas quality of confusion in the intellect, it does not cognise, "it is a shell," but thinks it to be a piece of silver. This phenomenon is revealed in the Gita, "From the quality of tamas comes apathy, confusion and ignorance". (14.15)

The intellect cannot perceive that it is a shell because maya causes it to cognise the silvery shine as silver. It must be noted that during the stage of indistinct knowledge, when no judgement was made on the object, the eyes did not perceive it as silver. During indistinct knowledge, the shell is simply an object of sight. Only after distinct knowledge, when confusion entered the intellect, did the cognition of silver occur. The Bhagavata explains this occurrence, "You who are one, the intellect falsely conceives as many." (10.87.37)

The Subodhini explains this passage, "The false silver is created, cognised and caused by the intellect. There, what is perceived between the senses and the object is false, not the object."

Again, the Bhagavata relates in this conjunction, "In the way the elements of light, water and earth are confused in a mirage occurs illusion." (Bhgavata 1.1.1.)

Vallabhacharya comments on that passage explaining, "This is like mistaking a shell for silver. All such confused phenomena are created by the souls intellect."

In correct cognition, the intellect comprehends what the senses perceive and makes no mayic imagination. "Otherwise cognition" occurs when the intellect apprehends something false in the process of the senses perceiving the object as in mistaking a shell for silver. The intellect creates maya which is. called the mistaken knowledge. Sri Vallabhacharya explains.. this occurrence, "In mistaken knowledge, an object is perceived other than the one which the senses actually cognise." (Subodhini 3.26.30)

In the unconditioned 3 illusion, the senses perceive the real object and not mayic things; it is the intellect which makes the mistake. In conjunction, the Lord says to Uddhava, "you should understand that whatever, is perceived through the mind, speech, sight and other senses is all Me and nothing but Me." (11.13.24)

Commenting on the Bhagavata passage, "It is all the Supreme Being," (Bhagavat 8. 2.6.15) Shri Vallabhacharya says, " All unconscious things in the world are the Supreme Being. What is perceived between the senses and their object by an intellect tainted by maya is false, the imagination of the intellect."

THE MAYAVADIAN VIEW

The Mayavadians say that, "When the senses perceive the indefinable 4 silver which is grounded in the shell the illusion occurs, "this is a shell"."

This is not the proper explanation. We can define the causer of the illusion. It is the shells glitter which makes the intellect imagine that it is a piece of silver.

3 An unconditional illusion is like mistaking a rope for a snake. These senses perceive the real object, but the intellect confuses the matter. Conditioned illusion is when the senses do not perceive the object correctly. For instance, when a white cloth is seen through green glasses it appears green.

4 The mayavadic use the word indefinable in the sense that it does not exist, They claim that being has no contradictions and non being can not appear, but because the appearance of the silver in the place of the shell appeared, it is indefinable. that it can not be defined in terms of being and non being.

Some other Mayavadians say that the confusion of seeing silver instead of a shell is not caused through indistinct or distinct knowledge, but by the indefinable silver appearing through maya perceived by the senses.

This is also not a proper argument. If maya alone caused the perception of the silver to arise, it would forever obstruct the true knowledge that it is a shell because there is no reason why the perception of silver would be removed.

If they argue in return, "Perception of both the silver and the shell are justified," this is contrary to experience, because a shell cannot be both a shell and a piece of silver. The shell which supports the error of the mistaken silver, can never be realized without distinct knowledge.

If the Mayavadians say, "Maya has created it and maya will ," destroy it," then it must be agreed that if the world is compared i in the same light, then maya must create and destroy it as well. If this were truly the case, then it would be useless to try to achieve knowledge and scripture would also be worthless, , because they would both be created by illusion. Then the mayavadians philosophy that "Knowledge destroys the world," would also be vanquished.

THE MEDIAL PHENOMENON

Commenting on the Bhagavata passage, "Those objects the souls created mayicly." (Bhagavata 3.7.16) Shri Vallabhacharya says, "Through Maya, the intellect imagines perception between the senses and the object. It is a medial phenomena and is false. If you touch upon the real ground of the object, then maya is destroyed and Brahman is realized. It is for this reason, that mayic knowledge is called groundless. The Mayavadians interpretation of cognition only deals with this medial perception." (Subodhini 3.7.16)

Those objects connected to both maya and the intellect are within the medial creation. They exist only in the intellect. The pot, cloth and other objects the Lord creates within the world should be known as real. For this reason, Shri Vallabhacharya " bas gone to great efforts to reject the conception that the real visible world is false.

REAL OBJECTS

Dizziness and jaundice cause the stab]e pot to appear as moving and a white hell to be yellow respective]y. This false spinning and yellowness are caused by maya which creates the characteristics of a miscognized object Shri Vallabhacharya explains that when false attributes are perceived along with the leal object, "The characteristics cf miscognized objects are mayic while the object itself is the Lord. Still there are some worldlike characteristics that appear in a miscogniton, otherwise, the confused perception would have no ground. Therefore, that knowledge produced from .the characteristics ,of a miscognized object is false while the knowledge produced from the real object is true." (Subodhini 2.9.33)

BEYOND SENSES

ARGUMENT: It is not possible to perceive in the pot the attributes of the .Lord because the Lord is beyond the scope of the senses. The Mundak .Upanishad relates, "The ,eyes cannot see (God)."

REBUTTAL: This is not a proper interpretation. This abovementioned passage and others describe the Lords primal form.. When the pot as we]l as the senses are the true parts of the Lord, there is no fault in saying that the pot, which is The Lords, is perceived through the eyes. If the pot and its perception have the characteristics of a miscognized object, .the above mentioned passage, "The eyes cannot see," becomes true.

The conditioned false perception that .the shell is silver etc. is removed by realizing the ground of the illusion, that is, the real shell. These false perceptions ,are removed when the jaundice and the dizziness cease. Even though a dizzy person knows that a pot is actually not spinning, he sees it. spin. This is a common experience .

THE ROPE AND SNAKE

In the unconditioned illusion of a rope seen as a snake and other similar false perceptions the intellect imagines the eyes are not at fault. The imagined snake is not an external phenome

non. The Bhagavat relates, " A false duality appears to them ho do not understand God." (Bhagavata 10.4.20) Shri Vallabhacharya comments on that passage, "The intellect cannot produce phenomena in the outside world."

COMPLEX CONDITIONED ILLUSION

In the illusion of the pot, e first have the perception of a real pot. Then its false spinning is perceived, which is a characteristic of miscognition. The peculiar nature of this complex, conditioned illusion makes the intellect wrongly consider, "The pot is moving".

When the Bhagavata and the Subodhini occasionally say that the objects which the senses perceive are false, they are referring to the abovementioned types of illusion.

REAL AND MAYIC WORLDS

As the pot is real, its spinning mayic, in the same way, the world is real but perceptions of attributes in the world like duality, ugliness, origination, destruction, etc. are mayic. 5

The Lord tells Uddhava in the Bhagavata, "Uddhava, whatever, you perceive with your mind, speech, eyes, and ears etc. are all perishable. They are creations of mind and maya." (Bhagavata 11.7.7)

In the above passage, the word perishable means whatever is mayic, what is not, is supreme truth.

Sri Vitthalanath echoes the same concept, "What is perceive as having origination and annihilation is illusion." (Vidvanman danam 36)

It is not proper to argue that the world is false like the shell confused for silver or the rope for the snake, because in the Nibandba it is said, "To call a pot a deformation of clay is jargon; actually it is clay." He explains his own statement, "The world is not false like the shell perceived as silver; other wise, the scriptures would have given the example of the shell and silver to prove the illusion of the world." (Shastrartha 83)

S They reason why these attributes are called mayic is because they conceal its true nature. a form of Brahman.

UNREAL DUALITY

Although there is no actual difference between the space inside a pot and the open sky, in the illusive pot, there appears an unreal difference. In the same way an unreal duality seems to appear between the world which has the characteristics of a miscognized object and the real world. Actually, there is no duality. In the example, "The space inside the mayic pot moves, "the experience of the spaces movement is a real attribute of the pot and not. separate from it. Similarly, the world that has the characteristics. of a miscognized .,..object, like 9rigination, etc. is not separated from the real world, As the space in a mayic pot and the open sky are nondifferent, the world which has the characteristics of a miscognized object and the real world are actually the same. Therefore, the world which has the characteristics of a miscognized object is also Brahman. Vallabhacharya agrees in his Subodhlni, "The world is comprised of Brahmans primal reality, but in appearance, seems mayic."6 (Subodhini 2.9.32)

PURE AND BONDED SOULS

Similarly, the conditioned appearance of difference between worldly souls in bondage and pure souls is up real. They are both parts of the Lord and therefore, do not differ. They are the pure forms of Brahman. ,

That the condition of samsara " bondage, is also false, Sri Vallabhacharya enlightens, "The soul is said to be in bondage. but this is only a manner of speech. Actually, the soul is never in bondage, samsara does not exist." (Shastrartha 23) Those wise Souls who follow the means of liberation achieve spiritual freedom. These are the ways of the bonded and liberated souls.

UNCONDITIONED CREATOR

The Mayavadins argument that, "There. must be a conditioned difference between the Brahman who creates the world

6 Because everything is Brahman and nothing but Brahman. any maya that is perceived in the world can not even escape the all pervasive Brahman. It is a real yet deluding aspect of Brahman, obviously placed there to enhance the quality of mundane sport.

and who does not, "7 is contrary to the scripture, "Form It occurs everything From the Supreme Soul appeared the sky That Supreme Soul itself created the world." (Taittiriya Upanisad 3..1, 2.1,2.7)

"From Him came the spirit, mind and all senses." (Mundaka 2..1.3)

Other passages also relate that the Lord who created the world; is eternal without any fault. This proves that the Brahman who Is revealed as the creator in the scriptures is unconditioned.

In this way It is clear that the world which has the: characteristics of a miscognition, even though in essence" is real, is sometimes said to be false:

The Mayavadians consider the world is real only in terms of phenomenal existence.

CREATED BY THE INTELLECT

Mayavadins argue, "You claim that in the unconditioned illusion, after indistinct knowledge, a shell is imagined by the intellect to be silver. Then you proceed to illustrate that the world, created by the Lord, is perceived through the eyes, but because ,of maya, the. confused intellect creates a medial phenomenon. 8 This theory of yours is not possible because the intellect cannot be an impression "of the medial phenomenon in the same fashion it registers the silver instead of the real shell.

The Mayavadin. argument is not proper because it has been proven from the beginning that the intellect is easily able to register the media! phenomenon with respect to the pots" and all other objects In the world When the ground of the illusive

1 The Mayavadins believe in two Brahman.

1 A unconditioned Brahman who created the world and is somehow effect by the deluding power of maya ;

2 An unconditioned Brahman who exists beyond all names and form.

This attitude has o testimony 1n the scriptures for Brabman can only be one and unconditioned.

8 What they are saying is that the intellect is not able to see in the real world, a mayic medal world.

silver, the shell, is realized, then the shells true qualities become known. Then the intellects confused perception of silver is removed. In a similar fashion, hen the senses perceive the world as a part of Brahman, the imaginary World disappears and the true world is seen.

Commenting on the Bhagavata passage, As a rope is seen as a snake and then disappears " (Bhagavata 10.14.25) Sri Vallabhacharya says, "The appearance and disappearance of a rope seen as a snake and then the realization that it is not is created through the intellect and In no other way.

THE WORLD IS GOD

In the Nibandha, Vallahhacharya says, "The world is not :a deformation of matter, not from atoms, not an illusion, but is a creation of the Supreme Reality. His own form." (Shastrartha 23)

The Subodhini agrees with this concept, "the world is the Lord." (Subodhini 2.9.33)

some other people argue that, "T6 divine world is true and the Lord s form, while the visible world is false and different from the divine world; "

In reply we say that the divine world is beyond the scope of the material senses. Therefore, there cannot be any indistinct knowledge, arid without indistinct knowledge illusion cannot .occur. What we perceive correctly through senses is the real world. Only an intellect confused by maya inwardly imagines mayic creations. Vallabhacharya summarizes his view of the world in his Siddhantmaktavali, " Akshara Brahman has two forms. The first is the world about which many philosophers have varied opinions. Some believe it to be mayic, others, a .deformation of material qualities..." Finally Vallabhacharya refutes those schools by giving the proper scriptural interpretation, "The world has appeared from Akshara Brahman."

If our opponents accept the falseness of the mayic World and .support that the divine world is beyond the scope of the matcrial senses and true, n there is no disagreement. We refute ,their notion that (he visible world is false. Actually, the true world goes through periods of appearance and disappearance.

To hold the world subject to origination and annihilation etc. is. false. The real world is not separated from Brahman. This has. been proven in the Abubhasya, Nibandha and Vidvanmandana and in other works. They all agree that to accept this world as false is contrary to scripture. If Vallabhacharya accepted the world as totally false, without qualifying that only the perception of origination, annihilation etc. are illusory, that his system, would agree with the Mayavadians.

IMAGINARY TEACHINGS

If the Mayavadians world is false, so must be their teachings. and their guru. Vallabhacharya says in this context, "Their imaginary teachings are suppose to grant liberation." (Shastrarth 69) If we believe. the world to be false we would be: subject to the same arguments. Therefore, intelligent people:: should not respect their view that the visible world is false.

MEANING OF MAYIC WORLD

Some passages in the Purnas state that the world is mayic but their actual intention is that the medial creation, produced through the confused intellect, i.e. the cognition of an imaginary aspect of an object, and the creation of me and mine are mayic Also, sometimes the world is called mayic to create renunciation. These passages .do not described the worlds true nature, a form of Brahman.

ROPE, NOT A SNAKE

If the Mayavadians hold the view that the silver imagined through the intellect is a product of the unimaginable power of maya perceived by the eyes, then, is not the real silver also false. Also, their theory fails to explain why, when you superimpose upon a snake the feeling of a rope it is still possible to be bitten, by the snake. 9 Actually, in darkness, when one touches a snake,. the touch creates an indistinct knowledge and maya then con fuses the intellect creating an impression of a rope. That rope:

9 I t is then questioned, if the entire world is false. then how is it possible to be bitten by a mayic snake ?

is created by the intellect. If that rope were able to appear in the world through the miraculous power of maya, then the hand: would actually grab a rope which appears between the hand and the snake, and not the snake. If this is the case, then how is the hand bitten by the snake and why would we hear about .about people bitten by snakes they confused for ropes. The rope which is imagined by the intellect is an internal phenomenon :and can never be perceived through the senses. What the senses perceive is actually the real snake.

In the Bhagavata passage, "like a fool who grabs a sleeping snake thinking it to be rope," (Bhagavata 10, 6.8) is explained it by Shri Vallabhacharya, "The snake thought to be a rope that is grabbed does not produce knowledge of itself through its touch.

By this explanation it is clearly revealed that we are touching the ground of the illusion, the snake and not the rope, otherwise, the imagined rope would have a phenomenal existence, would be functional, and the snake would never bite.

MAYAVADINS ILLUSION DISPROVED

Mayavadins argue : When a person confuses a snake for a Tope, while the illusion lasts, the rope which is indefinable in terms of being and non. being appears in the hand, but, when the illusion of the rope subsides, the snake is felt and then it bites.

Rebuttal: At the time one feels that the snake is a rope, it is not possible to remove the illusion, yet you claim that when the illusion subsides, the snake bites. This is not possible.

Mayavadins argue: The removal of the illusion occurs in a fraction of a second. It cannot be experienced as one would not be able to tell how long it takes a needle to pierce a single lotus petal when it cuts quickly through a closely packed stack of 100 other petals.

Rebuttal: The removal of the illusion depends on the true knowledge of the ground of the illusion. Without that cognition, it is possible to remove the illusion. ",

The Mayavadins argue: Besides the snakes bite, there are it other ways to remove the illusion. After the real ground of

the illusion of the rope the snake is realized and it bites.

Rebuttal: You pave a true cognition of the ground, (the snake) because of its ,bite. The illusion is removed at the time of the snake bite. If you re not able to realize the ground of the illusion that the rope is a snake until after it has bitten, then bow is it possible for the snake to bite when you are supposedly are holding rope. This contradicts your system

THE YOGIS TEACHINGS REVEALED

In the eleventh canto of the Bhagavata there are conversations with yogis in the form of questions and answers. Unless that portion is clearly explained, confusion can arise. To strengthen our philosophical stand we will look at those passages in accordance with the Subodhini".

"Nimi asks the yogi, "I Wish to know the maya of the . supreme Lord Vishnu which deludes even the wise." (Bhagavata. 11.3.1)

The yogi then narrates the creation of the world which enables us to conclude that the world is a product of maya ; otherwise, he would not have explained the creation of the. world when asked about maya. So we have an effectual definition of maya as the cause of the world. This proves that the world is mayic and not a form of Brahman. This is the Mayavadians argument.

In response to them, and to prove that the world is a form of Brahman, Sri Vallabhacharya explains in his Subodhini the four different meanings of maya :

I. Maya which embodies he Lords power of becoming everything.
2. Deluding maya.
3. Mayic mesmerism.
4. The mayic power of deceiving.

Argument: You are distinguishing the deluding maya from the maya which embodies the Lord power of becoming every thing. This does not agree with Vyasas mayic vision seen in his samadhi, the main source of bonafied knowledge Vyas says the sublime Person and His maya deludes every soul (Bhagvata 1.7.46)

Therefore, maya has only the form of deluding and not the power of becoming everything.

Explanation: This doubt of yours is resolved in the Subodhini. The deluding maya embodies the Lords power of becoming everything. When Vyasa just mentioned one type of maya the others are automatically included.

Mayavadins argue: The yogi explains the creation and not these four types of maya.

Explanation: Sri Vallabhacharya explains that the maya mentioned in the Bhagavata text actually means the Lords ability of acquiring all forms. It is an instrument in the continuous flow of creation which is "made by and is God," (Subodhini 11.3.3.)

The Upanishad agrees, "He created Himself." (Taittiya 2.7)

Also, in the Nibandha Sri Vallabhacharya says, "The universe is an effect and the form the Lord takes through the instrument ,of maya." (Shastrarth 23)

Mayavadis argue: If the world is the form of God, the word "maya" should not be used to describe it.

Sri Vallabhacharya answers their doubt, "Everyone is deluded by the objects of the world." (Subodhini 11.3.3)

Because fantastic worldly objects enchant everyone, the word maya is used for the world, not because it is false.

Thus, we have the four meanings of maya as well as the world, a form of the Lord, created through the instrument of maya. Vallabhacharya explains which of these meanings the "yogi is referring to, "Maya is the Lords unthinkable power." .(Subodhini 11.3.3)

In the Gita the Lord says, "My maya is difficult to cross." (Gita 7.14)

When Vyasa saw the enchanting maya in his samadhi, he used the word deluding.

From this and other passage, it is clear that Maya is one of the Lords powers and so Shri Vallabhacharya says, "In respect ,to maya being the Lords power, there is no doubt." (Subodhini 11.3.3.1)

In Vyasas deep trance of samadhi, where he saw the Lords .enchanting form of maya, there, the word "maya" is the proper word for that deluding potency, Why and for what cause is the

word maya used in relationship to creation is something Shri. Vallabhacharya addresses in his Subodhini. He explains that the following Bhagavata passages reveals the effect of maya. "When for no reason, something appear as it actually is not. (2.1.33)

The Mayavadins : Why dont you accept that the world is. the deluding maya and therefore false.

Rebuttal: This world is not a product of the deluding maya. but was created through maya which embodies the Lords. ability to become everything. The world is his own form.

Like an image is easily created from a clay mould and is then cast with molten gold, similarly, maya, which has all forms,. becomes the mould and the Lord fills that mould with his own, essence, and produces the world. Therefore, it is not mayic but identical with Brahman. The yogi also explains that the world! is a form of God but has done so in a different style. This is Vallabhacharyas intention. Because the Lord accepts the mould of maya, the word maya is used for meaning the flow of the real world. In this light the Yogi has used the word maya in relationship to the creation of the world.

"What meaning of the word maya should be accepted ?.(Subodhini 11.3.3) Vallabhacharya explains that the word maya. in the yogis context means the process of creation

VEDIC NARRATION

The Vedas do not describe the process of the creation in respect to maya but say He creates it Himself. This is their different way of explaining the same process. Vallabhacharya has also clarified these two different styles, "The narration 01 the creation differs in the Vedas and the Puranans. The Vedas say that the world is chiselled out by the Lord while in the Puranas the creation is described as being cast. (Subodhini 1.2.30)

These passages say that maya is the mould through which theLord creates himself. A golden image, whether chiselled or moulded, is still gold. Similarly, the creation, however manifested, was created by the Lord. ,The reason for the process or I creation explained in terms of moulding is "Then it will be easy

to understand." (Subodhini 1.2.30)

In the world, we see that it is easier to mould than it is too chisel a o rm. While the Vedas describe the process of the creation without reference to maya, the Puranas describe the creation in terms of a mould. Actually, they are both the same, the Lords form. In this light our doctrine is proved by the: Vedas and the Puranas.